HAMILTON

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Philosophical Classics for English Readers

EDITED BY

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BY

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WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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HAMILTON.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE AND WRITINGS.

The town of Airdrie is situated some eleven miles east of Glasgow, on the highroad to Edinburgh. Within the last century or less it has grown to be a big place, because of digging for coal and "black-band." Three hundred years ago it was ancient but unimportant. The surrounding fields had not been made hideous by repulsive black heaps, and its atmosphere was unbegrimed by foulness of soot and smoke. Men saw and felt the naturalness of the earth around it, and the beauty of the heaven over it. Very early in the sixteenth century, there stood close to this old burghal town a tower of the ordinary Scottish type. This was the residence of John Hamilton, styled of Airdrie. He was the second son of the head of a considerable family, Sir Robert Hamilton, Knight of Preston. Loyal to his chief and the king, he went forth with them to Flodden, and there shared the fate of "dule" along with so many other Scottish lairds. His descendant,—Gavin, third of the line,—fought on the side of Queen Mary. Another Gavin, fifth of the line, was with his kinsman, the Duke of Hamilton, at the battle of Worcester; and for the King and Covenant — he thinking the king believed in it — involved seriously his estate of Airdrie. The spirit of the father descended to his elder son, Robert, who sided with the Covenanters against the unmixed brutalities of Claverhouse and the Government. He fought under his kinsman, Sir Robert Hamilton of Preston, at Bothwell Bridge, where he was made prisoner. The second son, William, was, first, Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh, and then Principal of the University,—a man of considerable note in his time. Robert Hamilton of Airdrie had a son, William, who became minister of Bothwell. The eldest son of the minister, Robert, studied medicine in Glasgow, became M.D., and then successively Professor of Anatomy, and of the Practice of Medicine, in the University. He still held the estate of Airdrie,—somewhat curtailed from the time of the ancestor who fought at Worcester, but yet a considerable property. Smitten with the current spirit of speculation, he lost the most of it, and the last fragment of the ancient property was sold during the minority of his eldest son. Dr Thomas Hamilton, the younger brother of this Dr Robert Hamilton, succeeded him in the Chair of Anatomy. He died in 1781. His son was Dr William Hamilton; he succeeded his father in the same chair, and held it from 1781 to 1790. Dr William Hamilton died in this year, leaving two sons. The elder was William, afterwards Sir William Hamilton, Baronet of Preston, a name that will not be forgotten in the history of philosophy. The younger was Thomas, afterwards Captain Thomas Hamilton, a man of marked literary power, who has left in 'Cyril Thornton' a graphic and caustic portraiture of the affluence, the unconscious humour, and the homely ways of Glasgow life in the earlier years of the century. This young lad, William Hamilton, had a constitutional right, if there be anything in heredity, to a very vigorous and varied activity

He was born in a house attached to the College of Glasgow,—the old, quaint, dignified buildings reminding one of the style and the grace of Holyrood,—situated in the High Street of the city, whose worn pathways and picturesque crow gables had witnessed many a stirring scene in Scottish story. The day was the 8th of March 1788. He was thus but two years old on the death of his father. His upbringing devolved wholly on his mother and her relatives. Mrs Hamilton had been an Elizabeth Stirling. She belonged to a family of merchants in Glasgow, who once had been lairds of Bankeir and Lettyr, and were eventually the legal representatives of Janet Stirling, the heiress of Cadder—the oldest property of the Stirlings. Now, alike from their historical credit and their actual position, they occupied a high place amid the somewhat exclusive commercial aristocracy of the city. William Stirling, her father, was a man of great practical capacity and energy. He founded the trade in Glasgow of cotton and linen printing, first at Dalsholm on the Kelvin, and then at Cordale and Dalquhurn on the Leven. He was the direct lineal descendant of Robert Stirling of Lettyr, who fell in a feud in 1537, and whose descendants had from about that date been merchants in Glasgow. His wife was a daughter of Andrew Buchanan of Drumpellier. His eldest son, Andrew Stirling of Drumpellier, made out in 1818, before the Lord Lyon of the time, his claim to represent the oldest line of the Stirlings,—that of Cadder, a family of importance in the time of Edward I.[1] Mrs Hamilton was a somewhat stern, unbending, yet withal kindly woman. Though her father had at one time amassed a fortune, her means were not large, but she was careful; and in the management of her boys, whose force of character needed guidance and control, she succeeded well. The eldest boy cherished through life a passionate regard for his mother, and mourned her death as only a true and loyal son could do.

Young Hamilton was sent, like other boys of the time, to the Grammar or Latin school of Glasgow. He afterwards, in 1800, entered the junior Latin and Greek classes of the University, at the age of twelve. He was in the following year sent to a school in England, at

[1] This claim, impugned in the book of the 'Stirlings of Keir,' is thoroughly revindicated by the eminent antiquary, John Riddell, in his 'Comments on the Stirlings of Keir,' 1860. The story of Janet Stirling of Cadder, therein baldly told, shows her as one of the worst-used heiresses, even in lawless Scottish history. Her wardship of marriage was seized by John Stirling of Keir, and she was forced into a sort of Scotch marriage with his son James. When through this means she had been stripped of her ancestral estate, the unmanly husband divorced her on the ground of consanguinity, which he declared, falsely, to have been unknown to him at the time of the marriage. The heiress was then handed over like a chattel, and "married" to a fellow of the name of Bishop—a local writer and "servitor" to Keir, in which capacity Bishop had been his instrument for grasping the estate of Cadder. To complete the infamy of Keir, he contrived to disinherit the legitimate son of Janet Stirling, and deprive him of his mother's estate.

Bromley, under the charge of a Dr Dean. In 1803 he went to reside in summer with the minister of Mid-calder, the Rev. James Sommers. He again entered the University of Glasgow in session 1803-4, and passed through the Arts curriculum. The professors of the time were Richardson (Humanity), Young (Greek), Jardine (Logic), and Mylne (Moral Philosophy). Hamilton was the first student of his year in logic and in moral philosophy. He cherished through life a great regard for Professor Jardine, who, though not dealing much with philosophical questions, was yet a powerful general educator. Mylne taught a kind of sensationalism, based chiefly on the writings of Condillac and De Tracy. Hamilton's first introduction to philosophy cannot thus be said to have had any determining influence on the peculiar character of his subsequent opinions.

His mother and guardians had evidently destined him for the profession of medicine. We find that, along with the arts, he took classes in the medical faculty, particularly chemistry and anatomy. In the winter of 1806-7 he was in Edinburgh pursuing his medical studies. Meanwhile, however, he obtained an exhibition, the Snell, in connection with the University of Glasgow, but requiring the holder to study at Oxford. He went there accordingly in 1807. Hamilton does not appear to have got much from the tutors or the studies of the place. He formed a line of reading for himself—embracing especially the De Anima, the Ethics, the Organon, and the Rhetoric of Aristotle. When he went up for his final examination in Michaelmas 1810, he professed more and higher books than had before been given up for honours *in Literis Humanioribus.* So remarkable was the list, that Mr Gaisford, then an examiner, and afterwards Professor of Greek, took and kept a copy of it.[1] His examination was regarded at the time as one of unparalleled distinction. The period at Oxford was evidently the turning-point of his career. He there laid the foundations of that marvellous scholarship, and philosophical and historical research, which finally became the absorbing pursuit of his life. The special direction which his studies were to take, was foreshadowed in the Oxford list of books.

After leaving Oxford in 1810, Hamilton seems to have hesitated about entering the profession of medicine. He finally abandoned the idea, and began to prepare for law. He passed as advocate at the Scottish Bar in July 1813. After that he took up his residence with his mother in Edinburgh. His legal employment was never great; but it was considerable. He was not a ready speaker, — had, in fact, a certain nervous hesitation in his speech, which was against his success in public appearances. His tastes, too, were for the recondite departments of his profession, rather than the practical and money-making. He was well versed in civil law, in teinds, and he was strong in antiquarian and genealogical cases. Some of the legal papers which he drew up were considered remarkably able. But on the whole, the famous library in the hall down-stairs had greatly more attraction for him than the pacing of the Parliament House.

The family of Airdrie, whom Hamilton represented, was, as I have said, descended from the Hamiltons of Preston.

[1] See *Memoir of Sir W. Hamilton*, p. 58.

One of these was created a baronet of Nova Scotia in 1673. After suffering exile in Holland for his political opinions, Sir William Hamilton of Preston returned to England in the suite of the Prince of Orange, but died suddenly at Exeter on the march to London. His brother, Robert Hamilton, was commonly called Sir Robert, though, owing to his refusal to acknowledge the king as "an uncovenanted sovereign of these covenanted nations," he never actually assumed the baronetcy. He was a notable man in the struggles of the Covenanters. It was under him that the party defeated Claverhouse at Drumclog, and shortly afterwards lost the battle of Bothwell Bridge. He died in 1701. The baronetcy fell to the Hamiltons of Airdrie as heirs-male in general, but it was not taken up by them. Hamilton set himself to investigate the whole matter, shortly after being called to the Bar. His relative, Robert Hamilton of Airdrie, had died in 1799, and he was now the representative of that family. Assisted by John Riddell, the famous antiquarian lawyer, he presented his case, according to custom, to the Sheriff of Edinburgh and a jury in 1816. He was declared the heir-male in general of John Hamilton of Airdrie,—who died before 1522,—the second son of Sir Robert Hamilton, the seventh of Preston, and thus entitled to the baronetcy.

Hamilton was exactly the kind of man, the pure scholar and thinker, for whom Scotland had, and has, absolutely no sort of provision. The only chance for a man of this type, in the lack of any means for fostering scholarship or culture, is a university chair. And this chance is but occasional; it may be got, or lost for a generation, or even a lifetime. Hamilton's friends accordingly in 1820, when Dr Thomas Brown died, urged him to become a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh. He did so, but lost it; John Wilson being appointed professor. The decision turned very much in those days on politics: it lay with the Town Council. Hamilton was a Whig, Wilson a Tory. The Tories were in the majority, and put in their man.

Hamilton after this had no chance of any appointment of the least importance for sixteen years. In 1821 the Faculty of Advocates nominated him to the Chair of Civil History in the University, worth about £100 a-year. This sum was not even regularly paid, owing to the embarrassments of the city. In 1832 the Crown gave him the office of the Solicitorship of Teinds—a minor appointment, requiring his attendance once or twice a-week in the Parliament House. The salary was quite inconsiderable. This was the only legal promotion he received.

From 1820 onwards to 1829 there is little to record, beyond the fact of constant reading and application to his favourite pursuits. About this period, Phrenology was attracting notice in Edinburgh, and Hamilton was prompted to examine its pretensions. He addressed himself to the investigation of its principal general doctrines, particularly those respecting the function of the cerebellum, and the existence and extent of the frontal sinuses. His observations and experiments, conducted in a singularly careful and methodical manner, resulted in conclusions entirely subversive of the phrenological allegations on the points at issue.[1]

Two years after his mother's death, Sir William

[1] See *Memoir*, pp. 114, 115.

married his cousin, Janet Marshall, 31st March 1829. In her he found a helpmate of the most fitting and truest sort. She had a fund of wonderful practical power. She was unwearied in her assistance to her husband in his work, especially as amanuensis. His marriage, his comparatively limited means, and the character of his wife, furnished him with inducements to composition, which his habit of absorption in study, and an exaggerated ideal of what a piece of work ought to be, threatened to prevent him even from attempting.

The seven years from 1829 to 1836 was the most productive era of his life. He was now forty-one; he had amassed stores of learning on varied subjects; he had quietly matured a power of consecutive thinking and trenchant dialectic unequalled in his day. But he had written little or nothing. Fortunately a new editor —Mr Macvey Napier—had been appointed to the 'Edinburgh Review,' who had some acquaintance and sympathy with philosophical questions. Encouraged by Mr Napier, Sir William contributed to the 'Review' from 1829 to 1836 those essays on philosophical subjects, which riveted the attention of the few men of the time, in this country and abroad, who had any real knowledge of philosophy, and on which his repute as a thinker must, for the most part, ultimately rest. The power and mastery of detail shown in the discussion of the other subjects which he treated in the same period, attracted notice in even a wider sphere. The nature, amount, and variety of the work which he did in this period, may be gathered from the following summary of his contributions to the 'Review.' These were—"Cousin's Writings, and Philosophy of the Unconditioned," 1829; "Brown's Writings, and Philosophy of Perception," 1830; "Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum," 1831; "State of the English Universities," 1831; "Oxford," 1831; "Revolutions of Medicine," 1832; "Johnson's Translation of Tennemann's Manual," 1832; "Logic," 1833; "Cousin on German Schools," 1833; "The Right of Dissenters to admission into the English Universities," 1834 and 1835; "The Patronage and Superintendence of Universities," 1834; "The Deaf and Dumb —review of Dalgarno," 1835; "The Study of Mathematics," 1836; "The Conditions of Classical Learning," 1836. After a lapse of three years, in 1839 he made his last contribution to the 'Review,' in the form of a notice of Idealism and Arthur Collier.

These contributions to the 'Review' represented fairly the different lines of Hamilton's interest and intellectual activity. The exceptions are his study of Modern Latin Poetry, of Buchanan, and Luther and the Lutheran writings. His essays on Oxford and English University Reform bore fruit in the Commission of 1850; and at present there is a tendency to make changes in the line he indicated — viz., restoring the old practice of public lectures and professorial education.[1]

In 1836 Hamilton was appointed to the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh. It was chiefly through the influence of Cousin, Brandis, and others on the continent of Europe, brought to bear on the Town Council of Edinburgh, that Hamilton, by a small majority, obtained the appointment. The men in whose hands the appointment lay, knew themselves as much of philosophy,

[1] See *Memoir*, p. 167 *et seq.*

and the merits of philosophical candidates, as they knew of the differential calculus. But they had the advantage of being tied to no philosophical sect. From this, their ignorance preserved them. The only danger was, that they might look at a candidate from the point of view which alone interested them—the political or ecclesiastical. This was no worse, at any rate, than the prevailing nepotism of the Glasgow Senate of the time. Hamilton held the Chair for twenty years, until his death in 1856.

It was in 1836, while composing his first course of lectures, that Hamilton turned his attention to a new edition of Reid's Works. His labours on Reid were greatly interrupted; the book finally appeared in 1846.

In 1844 Hamilton was struck down by illness. It was an attack of paralysis, hemiplegia of the left side. The stroke was sudden and heavy to bear. He was yet in his prime, and, up to the day of his seizure, had been active and athletic beyond most men. The illness which followed was tedious, and it left him broken in health and vigour. His intellect, however, was entire, active, and acute as before, and his wonderful memory remained unimpaired. He himself, indeed, considered that his memory was even better and more reliable after his illness than before. This improvement he accounted for by his being liable to fewer outward abstractions than formerly. But there was much physical weakness, which made all bodily exertion laborious and painful. Still he carried on his congenial work, brought out his edition of Reid's Works, and republished, with additions, his contributions to the 'Edinburgh Review.' With the exception of the winter of 1844-45, he appeared regularly in his class-room, read a portion of the hour's lecture, having an assistant who read the remainder. The income of the Chair was not great; barely £500 a-year. Out of this, up to 1844, £100 a-year had to be paid to the former occupant. There was no retiring allowance. Had there been any provision of this sort, Sir William would doubtless have withdrawn from the work of the Chair before his death. But there is no ground for the statement that his state of health in any way lessened his efficiency in the Chair. His mode of teaching and his influence remained entirely unimpaired to the close of his career. This was due to the heroic nature of the man, who, true to his favourite motto, showed, amid physical infirmity, that in man the greatest thing is mind.

After his illness, Hamilton's friends on both sides of politics, but especially those on the Conservative side, made an effort to have his public services and contributions to philosophy and literature rewarded by a pension. This was in 1846. Lord John Russell, the Minister of the day, offered him £100 a-year. This he declined, on the ground of its inadequacy to his services. The conduct of the Minister throughout this matter was an offence to the Whigs and a subject of scorn on the part of the Conservatives. An arrangement made by some friends resulted in the pension being bestowed on Lady Hamilton some three years later. This sort of thing has been nearly always the case. Scientific discoverers, who [illegible] and touch, and such intriguing local politicians, who can manage a borough or a county, are rewarded. But for men of abstract thought there is little appreciation and no provision. The kind of faculty which gets to high places does not understand their work, and takes no account of them. Yet these men have proved in the end the most influential forces in moulding society. But as this action takes time, and meanwhile does not influence votes, the men themselves may live unassisted, and, so far as the politician is concerned, die unregarded.

The Lectures on Psychology and Metaphysics, and those on Logic, as we now have them, were written during the nights of the winters of 1836-37 and 1837-38. Nothing like them had been known or felt before in Scotland or in a Scottish University. These Lectures were for twenty years the most powerful factor in the philosophical thought of Scotland. But for them the knowledge of questions, of authors, and of technical terms current abroad, would have been unknown to our philosophical literature; even the present state of philosophical discussion, where it is reactionary and adverse, would not have been possible. At the same time, we ought to understand properly the position of those Lectures as an exposition of their author's philosophical opinions, and in relation to his other writings. I thus spoke on this point in 1869 :—

"It is perhaps necessary here to say a word regarding the place of the Lectures as an exposition of their author's philosophical doctrines, and in relation to his other writings. What has been already said of the circumstances under which they were composed, and the purpose which they were designed to subserve, is sufficient to show their special and exceptional character as expositions of their author's opinions. This was pretty fully explained in the Preface to the first edition of the Lectures (p. ix. *et seq.*) But as a recent critic, who professes 'to anticipate the judgment of posterity on Sir W.

Hamilton's labours,' has yet represented the Lectures as 'the fullest and only consecutive exposition of his philosophy,' and has very elaborately criticised the author's opinions on this assumption, it may be proper again to state the matter at greater length. Though written subsequently, in point of time, to the articles in the 'Edinburgh Review' on Cousin (the Unconditioned), on Perception, and on Logic, the Lectures were yet prior to nearly all the footnotes on Reid, to all the Dissertations supplementary to the same author, and to the development of Sir William's special logical doctrine of a Quantified Predicate with its consequences—prior, in fact, to all that can fairly be regarded as the published authoritative expositions of his philosophical doctrines, excepting only the articles in the 'Review.' In the Lectures, indeed, we find the subject of Perception treated with somewhat greater detail, and certainly with more diffuseness, than in the article on the same subject in the 'Review;' but we must have recourse to the Dissertations supplementary to Reid (Notes B, C, D, and D*) for the full and final development of Sir William's own doctrine of Perception. To these, as he himself tells us in a footnote to the article on Perception, republished in the 'Discussions,' he gives references 'when the points under discussion are more fully or more accurately treated.' These Dissertations were published for the first time in 1846, ten years after the 'Lectures on Metaphysics were written. Again, the doctrine of the limitation of human knowledge—of the Conditioned and Unconditioned—is formally expounded only in the article on M. Cousin's writings, republished in the 'Discussions' (1852), and in the new matter contained in Appendix I. A and B. In the 'Lectures on Metaphysics' (L. xxxviii., xxxix., xl.) he states the doctrine with some illustrations, and seeks to show its application to the principle of causality. But this exposition is slighter and looser in manner than that in the article on Cousin, and earlier in time than the consideration of the same point in the Appendix to the 'Discussions,' where, as he says, a 'more matured view of the conditions of thought' is to be found than that given in the review of Cousin. The Lectures on Consciousness contain, among other matters, the distinctive doctrine which he developed under the designation of the Argument from Common Sense; but here, too, we must refer for the latest and most precise exposition of the doctrine to Note A of the supplementary Dissertations to Reid's Works. The 'Lectures on Logic' contain, of course, the fullest exposition of his views of the details of that science from the Aristotelic and Kantian standpoints. But his new and special logical doctrines (with the exception of that of Comprehension in Concepts, Judgments, and Reasonings) are only cursorily and incidentally treated in two lectures, which he occasionally interposed in the middle of the course on Logic, and which are to be found in the Appendix to the second volume of the Logic Lectures (p. 255 (c), first edition). The latest and fullest development of his special logical theory is to be found in the 'Discussions,' second edition, Appendix II. A and B. On many topics—especially the distinctive doctrines in the philosophy of their author—the Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic can in fairness be taken merely as the point from which he started in his course of philosophical investigation; and where there may appear, as there must do in the career of every man of vitality of thought and activity of research, any difference or discrepancy between the earlier and the later form of opinion—as, for example, in his theory of association—the later view, especially if it be also that published by himself, is that which ought, in common fairness, to be attributed to the author, and dealt with as his. What renders this the more imperative in the present case is, that Sir William did not find it necessary or expedient to embody the fuller or more advanced statement in his series of Lectures, which were already sufficient to occupy the whole time of each session, and most adequately to fulfil the wants of university instruction. For the more elaborate and more advanced discussions of certain questions he was content to refer his students to his published writings. After their first composition, indeed, the Lectures were never substantially changed ; they received only occasional verbal alterations. Though amply sufficient for the purposes of class instruction, they were always spoken of by their author as falling far short of complete or adequate courses, whether of Metaphysics or of Logic—as forming, in fact, only introductions to a full and thorough-going discussion of the principal topics of those sciences. In the Lectures he certainly introduces and briefly discusses a number of subjects upon which he has not otherwise given anything to the world. But these are taken up always and only with a view to class instruction, and do not receive at his hands (as, in the time allotted to each course, they could not) that prolonged or deliberate treatment which is accorded to the subjects of the 'Discussions' or of the 'Dissertations on Reid,' published in his lifetime. On the more elementary and trite parts of philosophy and logic, Sir William, moreover, was content to piece together expositions from authors who had clearly stated current or received opinions. This practice he carried to a greater extent than was desirable or commendable ; the only consideration that could even temporarily excuse it being the pressure under which the Lectures were originally written—for which, however, he had ample time subsequently to apply a remedy. Whatever degree of censure may be awarded on this ground, it is a matter of positive unfairness in any critic who professes to discuss Sir W. Hamilton's opinions, to deal with these Lectures—written early, hastily, for a special and temporary purpose, never revised for publication by their author, not containing either the most authentic or the most complete statements of his peculiar doctrines—as of co-ordinate authority with his other published writings ; and, keeping all this out of view, actually to represent them as 'the fullest exposition of his philosophy.' This they are not, in any true or pertinent sense of those words ; they are simply offhand expositions of a series of philosophical questions, and are in many respects of style and treatment in absolute contrast to the author's published writings. What a knight in undress was to himself armed *cap-à-pie*, this Sir William is in the loose robes of the Lectures compared with himself in his usual formal and guarded manner. The spirit of ancient chivalry would have disdained to draw the sword at a vantage, and would have sought a foe when his armour was on: but the modern philosophical knight-errant is of a different type; he strikes his home-thrusts through the loose robe, and withal loudly proclaims that his opponent was armed to the teeth.

"As to the other statement, that they are 'the only consecutive exposition of his philosophy,' it is hardly better founded than the preceding. Though the Lectures, especially those on Logic, show great clearness and power of arrangement of a certain number of philosophical topics for purposes of academical instruction, and are thus 'consecutive,' they are far from being a 'consecutive exposition of his philosophy;' for a consecutive development of his distinctive theories in Metaphysics and Logic he has not anywhere given, unfortunately enough for the interests of those sciences, but especially for a competent comprehension of his views by his critics."[1]

Mr Mill notices this criticism of his method of dealing with Hamilton in the preface to the fourth edition of his 'Examination.' What he has to say in reply is, that the Lectures are to be considered "a fair representation of his [Hamilton's] philosophy." "A complete representation," he says, "I never pretended they were; a correct representation I am bound to think them; for it cannot be believed that he would have gone on delivering to his pupils matter which he judged to be inconsistent with the subsequent development of his philosophy." This is all Mill has got to say in answer to the charge—(1) that he had represented the Lectures as "the fullest and the only consecutive exposition of his philosophy,"

[1] *Memoir*, pp. 209-213.

while it was shown that they did not contain many of his doctrines at all, and these the latest and most matured. Is "a fair representation" equivalent to "the fullest and the only consecutive exposition"? How is a book "a fair representation of a philosophy" which does not contain its latest developments?—It is all, moreover, he has to say in answer to the charge (2) that he had actually proceeded on the assumption that the earliest statements of the Lectures were of co-ordinate authority with those made at a later period, and declared to be "more matured expositions" of the doctrines; and had criticised Hamilton's opinions accordingly.

The quibble about "correct representation" need deceive no one. The Lectures are to be viewed as a correct representation of Hamilton's philosophy, because, their author having delivered them to the end, there could be nothing in them inconsistent with the subsequent development of his philosophy. But might not Hamilton have advanced to new doctrines, nay, doctrines which superseded earlier opinions, without thinking it necessary to embody these in his courses of lectures, designed, as they were, for purposes of comparatively elementary instruction? Might he not, for example, have advanced on the doctrines of the Aristotelian logic,—even replaced some of these by others,—pointing out generally that he did so, without there being any possible supposition of inconsistencies between the earlier views of the Lectures and the subsequent development of his philosophy? And is this not exactly what the evidence lying clear before Mill might have taught him was the fact? In this case, does the quibble about "a correct representation" save the character of the critic? Are the Lectures to be regarded as "a correct representation" of doctrines maintained by the author, which they do not contain?

Onwards from 1844, the course of Hamilton's life was a struggle,—a noble struggle with physical infirmity. But Hamilton did grand and continuous work during that period to the end of his life. This is shown in the additions to the 'Discussions,' and in the edition of Reid's Works.

All through this period of life, onwards to the close, there is a curious pathetic interest. His eldest boy had gone out to India as a soldier, and the father was keenly interested in the career of the son. This is touchingly apparent in the letters sent from home to India, which conveyed the father's dictation, or his loving message. Once the lad, suddenly attacked by natives in the night, had risen and baffled them with the keen blood and courage of his race. The news reached the old man at home, and all the deep affection and pride of his nature rose in him and throbbed to tender emotion. Hamilton's was a character of such strength, that whether it found outlet in abstract thought or in feeling, it appeared always as if that were its only, because its intensest, form.

Sir William was for some years before his death engaged, at the instance of the trustees of Miss Stewart, on a complete edition of Dugald Stewart's works. This he accomplished. But the memoir of Stewart was still to be written. To this he had made certain fragmentary contributions; but the hand was failing somewhat. The thought of the work evidently pressed heavily upon him. He passed away before the task was required of him.

It was, if I remember rightly, on Saturday the 3d of

May 1856 that I called at the house, 16 Great King Street, to inquire for him. I had learned that he was not so well as he had been at the close of the session about the middle of April, and some days before when I had seen him. I had had the honour of assisting him in the work of the class during the session, chiefly reading the greater portion of each day's lecture. I had thus the privilege of daily intercourse with him during the last six months of his lifetime. The deeply affectionate, the true, inner nature of the great strong man, was revealed to me by many a slight and touching incident, too sacred to be given to the world, and probably such as this said world would not care for. On this Saturday I found Lady Hamilton anxious, tearful. There was the intense devotion of the eager-hearted woman, mingled with a painful foreboding. The symptoms indicated congestion of the brain. On Monday morning, the 5th, there was the beginning of unconsciousness; and when I went again on Tuesday, he had passed away early that morning.

Hamilton was a man to love, to fear, and to revere. I thus wrote of him after his death, and I have nothing to add or change:—

"All through life there was a singleness of aim, a purity, devotion, and unworldliness of purpose, and a childlike freshness of feeling, which accompanied, guided, and in a great measure constituted his intellectual greatness. To the vulgar ambitions of the world he was indifferent as a child; in his soul he scorned the common artifices and measures of compromise by which they are frequently sought and secured. To be a master of thought and learning, he had an ambition; in this sphere he naturally and spontaneously found the outlet for his powers. But this craving, passionate as it was, never did harm to the moral nature of the man. The increase of years, the growth of learning and fame, took nothing away from the simplicity of his aim, his devotion to its pursuit, or his freshness of heart. No sordid covering ever gathered over his soul to restrain the warmth, the quickness, the chivalrousness, the generosity of his early emotions; no hardened satisfaction with the routine of the world settled down on a nature which had looked so long and so steadily at the point where definite human knowledge merges in faith:—

'Time, which matures the intellectual part,
Had tinged the hairs with grey, but left untouched the heart.'

The elevated intellectual sphere in which he lived carried with it a corresponding elevation and purity of moral atmosphere; the ideals of philosophy had been to him far more than the world of the real."

After Sir William Hamilton's death, a sum was subscribed for a Fellowship in connection with the University of Edinburgh, in honour of his memory. A bust of him was also made by Brodie, the cost of which was defrayed by subscription. This is now in the Senate Hall of the University of Edinburgh. Best of all, perhaps, twenty gentlemen in his native city subscribed £2000 to purchase his library. This is now intact, —a gift to the University of Glasgow, in which he was educated, and by which he was sent as a Snell exhibitioner to Oxford.

Lady Hamilton survived her husband for more than twenty years, dying on the 24th December 1877. This year (1882), on the 2d of March, the only daughter, Elizabeth, passed away, after showing that she inherited in no small measure her father's high aims, and much of his characteristic power.

Looking back on his life, the career of Hamilton presents itself to us in two aspects—that of a teacher of philosophy, and that of a writer on philosophy. Of his power as a teacher, I shall here only say that he inspired the youth who listened to him by the feeling of an absolutely disinterested love of truth; of a simple life devoted to the walks of abstract thought, as if therein was for him the highest charm and the most natural sphere of life—all professional, all worldly ambition being utterly sunk and insignificant. And to those of his students thus feeling him and thus inspired by him, who gave themselves up for a time to his power, and followed from day to day the clear, firm-paced, vigorous, and consecutive steps of his prelections, he became the moulder of their intellectual life. During the twenty years in which he occupied the Chair, from 1836 to 1856, his influence as a teacher of philosophy was unequalled in Britain. It is doubtful whether it had any parallel in a Scottish, or a British, University before; certainly it has had none since.

But it is chiefly as a writer and contributor to the progress of philosophical thinking that I have now to do with Sir W. Hamilton. Up to his time, the complexion of philosophical thought in Scotland may be said to have been wholly native to the soil. There could be no question as to the originality of such writers as Hume and Reid, to say nothing of inferior names. Hume was negative and destructive of cherished beliefs, but the weapon was wholly his own—the criticism of the principles of Locke and Berkeley. His tone, too, was that of the *pococurante* man of the century in which he lived; easy, good-humoured, somewhat indifferent, finding a sort of certainty in the facts of the present world, but looking very much on what might cast up afterwards, as a chance unpredictable as the throw of the dice, yet not denying the possibility at least of some sort of evolution in the unknowable future. He was the Edinburgh polite man of letters all over, with more subtlety than any other man of his day, and probably less belief than even the most of the men around him, and that was very little, in dignity of character or purity and elevation of motive. There was a great talk in this circle of "the beauty of virtue," but the admiration was much more for the beauty than the virtue.

Thomas Reid, on the other hand, who followed Hume in the order of time, was more of a typical Scotchman and Scotch thinker than Hume or any one before him. Reid was strongly conservative of our natural beliefs. He did not think that "reason" could give him anything better. He was not less original in his defence of these, and in reply to Hume, than Hume had been in attack. In fact, he challenged the title of "Reason" to say anything of superior authority, unless it could, to begin with, vindicate itself as better than natural belief in its ultimate form. Reasoning on groundless or unproved assumptions is not Reason. If Reid's thought was not so subtle as that of Hume, it was more robust; and the spirit which he carried into philosophy was not one due to the *belles lettres* society of Edinburgh of the time, but had grown up through the influence and associations of the Scottish country manse and the traditions of the old Scottish Kirk. His father was a clergyman; his forefathers had been clergymen for generations; and the moral spirit of Reid was, in a measure, an outcome of his ancestors. It was a thoroughly earnest spirit, deepened into reverence by a long course of solitary meditation on the ultimate questions regarding man, the world, and God, and the bearings on these of the current philosophy. Reid had not a very wide acquaintance with the literature of philosophy; but he saw in the issues of the premisses of Locke and Berkeley very grave bearings on moral and theological beliefs, and those premisses it was his function to scrutinise. The highest thought could not be left in contradictory results.

Adam Fergusson, the historian of the Roman Republic, and expounder of the stoical system of ethics in Edinburgh, had force and eloquence of style; but he was a moral philosopher rather than an inquirer into the theory of knowledge. Dugald Stewart, his successor, was the one man of learning of the school of Scottish thought; but even his learning was more of an accomplishment than an inspiring, originating element in his philosophy. He kept very close to the views of Reid, of which he was a singularly clear and eloquent exponent.

Dr Thomas Brown, whose influence intervened between that of Stewart and Hamilton, was indebted largely to foreign sources for his opinions, but only to one school, the sensational of France. He was inspired by Condillac and De Tracy. His writings and teachings form a sort of foreign episode in our philosophical literature. With certain positive relations to Hume, he has no distinctive originality, and cannot be said to have had a permanent or continuous influence on the thought of the country. Certain of his more especially sensational doctrines have influenced the two Mills, father and son, and thus affected the thinking of England, which, since the days of Locke, has always been under the influence of impressions rather than ideas.

In moral spirit Hamilton was allied to Reid, not to Hume, and he followed in the line of the earlier Scottish thought as represented by Reid; but he carried this up to far higher issues than had before been dreamt of. Both Reid and Stewart had properly returned to psychology—in a word, to consciousness, as they were forced to do by the meagre analysis on which Hume had proceeded. Hamilton thoroughly accepted their method, that of a scrutiny of consciousness in its fullest integrity; but he was clearer and more precise in his tests and criteria. And not satisfied with the somewhat partial and faltering applications of psychological results to metaphysical questions by the earlier thinkers, Hamilton boldly grappled with the highest questions of philosophy regarding our knowledge of being, Infinite and Absolute Reality. Even the manner and style of dealing with the psychological and logical questions took new forms in his hands. He brought the questions nearer to the methods of the learned, and to the treatment of them in other schools. Even in his youth he had gone far beyond the range of reading in philosophy then usual in Scotland. He had studied the 'Organon' of Aristotle, and had acquired a mastery of it at an early age, rarely paralleled at the close of the long and laborious efforts of a lifetime. Even at Oxford he knew it better than all the tutors. He was familiar with the principal schoolmen. Durandus and Biel he had studied well, and with a shrewdness and power of assimilation that stood him in good stead, when in later life he elaborated his doctrine of Perception. Descartes and the Cartesian school had been matter of minute investigation; and from Descartes he gathered the ultimate principle in his theory of knowledge—viz., the subversion of doubt in the fact of consciousness. He had mastered German at a time when few people in the country knew anything about its literature or philosophy. He had given diligent and quite competent attention to the 'Critique,' and to the logical writings of Kant. He had traced the course of subsequent German speculation through Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, as his unpublished notanda especially show. The influence of Kant both upon the cast of his thought and his philosophic phraseology is marked enough. In point of positive doctrine, however, the two men in Germany he most nearly approached were Jacobi and G. E. Schulze. His relation to the absolutism that followed Kant was decidedly antagonistic from the first; but the mode of thought which it represented, and its phraseology, are seen in his writings. This reading and training in other schools widened his conceptions of the problems of philosophy, and disclosed to him points of view and relations among those problems, unnoticed in the homespun thinking of Scotland that went before him. And when he made his first published contribution to philosophy, in the essay on Cousin, in the 'Edinburgh Review' of October 1829, the first impression, even among people who professed some philosophical knowledge, was that of astonished bewilderment rather than admiration, or even appreciation.

The essay on Cousin dealt with a question regarding the reach and limits of human knowledge which was wholly new, in form at least, to British speculation. That on Perception (1830) revealed an amount of philosophical learning, and put the question on grounds not less new to our literature. It pointed out issues, moreover, which turned on the question of the ultimate authority of the intuitive consciousness, which had not been previously seen to be involved. The discussion on Logic (1833) was not less a revelation to the country. It put the science on a basis which had not been possible through any previous line of analysis in Scotland. It brought to a point the issue between the two schools of the Deductive and the Inductive Logics, boldly challenging for the former an independent sphere and proper laws. Whether we agree or not with the conclusions of those essays, we must admit that any one who differs from them cannot afford to pass by the forms of the questions which Hamilton stated for the first time in our literature, or the arguments by which his own view is supported, without virtually acknowledging that he has left principal positions in philosophy unassailed, and trenchant reasoning unanswered.

As the form of the questions in those discussions differed greatly from what had gone before, so did the style. The thinking was exact, precise, and very subtle; so was the expression. The severely abstract character of the thought, and the learning that had brought treasures from other schools, found outlet in a correspondingly abstract style and in technical terms which were simply a bewilderment to the mere vernacular reader. On such the power and historical importance of the first essay at least were greatly lost. It is thus that Jeffrey wrote of the review of Cousin, on its publication, to the editor of the 'Edinburgh Review:'—

"Cousin, I pronounce beyond all doubt the most unreadable thing that ever appeared in the 'Review.' . . . It is ten times more *mystical* than anything my friend Carlyle ever wrote, and not half so agreeably written. It is nothing to the purpose that he does not agree with the most part of the mysticism, for he affects to understand it and to explain it, and to think it very ingenious and respectable, and it is mere gibberish."[1]

This is about as fair a specimen of the *sutor ultra crepidam* as could well be given. But it may be taken as a specimen of the level of philosophical knowledge which had been reached, even by the leading literary authority of the time. The inherent force of the discussion was shown by the place which it finally attained in public opinion at home, in face of the degree of ignorance which it had to overcome. Sir James Mackintosh, a man whose reading and cast of mind were of greater breadth and philosophical culture, showed a better appreciation of the essay when he said—

"I think the review of Cousin has no fault but that of not being in the least degree adapted to English and British understandings, for whom it should have been meant. But the writer is a very clever man, with whom I should like to have a morning *tête-à-tête*."

Mackintosh here touched the only fault of the essay, but it was obviously one which, though it might have been lessened, could not be wholly removed within the limits of a Review article. We should be

[1] *Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier*, p. 68.

thankful that Mr Macvey Napier's penetrating sense put Jeffrey's criticism aside, and solicited the author to continue his contributions to the 'Review.' Of course, in Germany and France, where there really was some knowledge of the higher philosophical questions, the discussion was at once appreciated, and attracted the notice of the eminent philosophic thinkers of the time. There is indeed no parallel in our times to the European reputation which those three Review articles gained in the short space of seven years, for a man known only by their authorship. Even now we may look back on them as containing in substance the whole philosophy of Hamilton. His labours on Reid, his Lectures, and the Discussions in their final form, cannot be said essentially to go beyond the lines of thought therein laid down. There are naturally advances, and there are modifications; but these years, from 1829 to 1836, were really the productive years in the growth of his philosophical thought.

Well might Napier write in 1836—

"I confess that I have a sort of selfish joy in this splendid approbation of those papers, which I have been instrumental in drawing forth from you, and for the doing of which I have been blamed by those who should have known better what a journal like the 'Edinburgh Review' owes to science and the world."

Hamilton, while he lived and wrote, was confessedly the most powerful speculative thinker in Britain. He was also the most learned, the man best acquainted in his time with philosophical opinions, past and present. No one before him had put the questions of philosophy as they needed to be, in face of the historical development which they had reached. His mode of statement and discussion, his phraseology, were then all utterly new to British philosophical literature. But at the same time there was an imperfectly realised conviction among reflective men that in his hands the philosophical problems had taken new shapes, and had received new and powerful solutions. And the average of moderately informed people, who took an interest in those questions, accepted his conclusions as almost absolute dicta, at least utterly "irredarguable conclusions," to use an expression of his own. The state of dogmatism or acquiescence thus superinduced was not altogether healthy; and it was well that one form of intense action or dogmatism should lead to a reaction—the reaction at least of rethinking his processes, and so revivifying his conclusions, and possibly modifying them. As he himself says:—

> "If the accomplishment of philosophy imply a cessation of discussion, if the result of speculation be a paralysis of itself, the consummation of knowledge is only the condition of intellectual barbarism."[1]

But, as a rule, reaction in philosophy, when carried out through the mere passive receptivity of opinions, is violent and irrational. And so it has proved in the case of Hamilton. It was unfortunate in this point of view, that the reaction was led principally by a man who, with a high repute in other branches of study, had really no accurate or broad acquaintance with the questions of intellectual philosophy, and none whatever with the development of philosophy from Kant to Hegel and

[1] *Discussions*, p. 40.

Cousin, the period with which Hamilton had especially dealt. It was unfortunate, too, that what may be called the speculative faculty of the critic was of a cast which, compared with that of Hamilton, was utterly out of proportion either for understanding or criticising. Combined with this was the circumstance of a public press full of the idea of the power of this man on other subjects,—not accurately acquainted at the same time with the scope or method of Hamilton's speculations,—ready to accept a critic's statement without questioning, however ignorant or incompetent; ready thus to spread the critic's estimate over an equally uninquiring and ill-read public. Hence it came about, that, with a few honourable exceptions, the critic's estimate was accepted as intelligent, and his verdict as all-prevailing and final. Happily for the interests of truth, the tide has turned; and even the "general reader" is beginning to discover that the critic so lauded in his hour, while making here and there his little acutenesses, has the essential defect of misconceiving his author on every essential point of his philosophy. It seems impossible for Mr Mill to place himself in Hamilton's sphere of vision, that of abstract speculative thought. Mr Mill may be strong in the region of the *axiomata media*, and the bearing of such principles on practice and life; but he is certainly weak where Hamilton was strong. The proof of this is to be found in the fact that he has entirely misconceived the doctrine of the Unconditioned, and, indeed, of the Relativity of knowledge in general; that he has missed the point of the argument against Cousin; that he has confused throughout the Infinite and the Indefinite; that he has mistaken the argument from Negative notion; that he has misrepresented the distinction between Belief and Knowledge; that he has entirely misunderstood the distinction between Immediate and Mediate Knowledge. As for Hamilton's main logical doctrines, Mill's examination is for the most part a simple caricature.[1]

There is an intellectual fairness and breadth of view characteristic of the trustworthy critic. This weighs a writer's statements, tries to find the meaning of his words, to compare and truthfully conciliate apparently conflicting expressions of them, with a view to elicit the real meaning. But of this there is no trace in Mill's work. One of the most constant practices, indeed, of the 'Examination,' in dealing with Hamilton's style, is to put into his terms some popular meaning, without at all inquiring whether the writer he criticises has defined these terms or not in a philosophical sense, or whether he even uses them in a sense accepted in philosophy. It is thus easy to treat statements as meaning what was never contemplated. This method of criticism is convenient and cheap, but it is fruitless of anything but the semblance of victory.[2]

[1] On this point, see *Hamilton v. Mill, passim*, a very able and conclusive exposure of Mill's perpetually recurring fallacies on the logical points.

[2] Of the first and second editions of the 'Examination,' this, said by a competent critic, is less than literally true:—

"A reader who compares the two editions together will probably be surprised at the number of silent omissions and corrections. These, no doubt, show a laudable desire on the part of the author to amend his work; but on the other hand, they also show that it was originally written with very insufficient preparation. The majority of the amendments, so far as I can see, do not much improve the argument, though they are evidence of the author's persevering determination to find Sir W. Hamilton wrong somehow or other."—Mr

As to the constant parade of "contradictions" which Mill makes, it may be said once for all, that Hamilton's "contradictions" are, as a rule, simply Mill's confusions. There may be, nay, there must often be, apparent contradictions in a philosophical system which deals with the highest questions. A thinker of a true metaphysical insight has said:—

"Some uncertainty of view, possibly even involving inconsistency, is by no means a defect in a philosopher in my eyes; if only it seems to arise not from confused thought, but from a continued *nisus* in the conception of truth, a struggle, a feeling after it."[1]

Mill's "contradictions, on the other hand, are either grounded in misconception, or they are the result of strained verbal interpretation.

One other form of criticism of Hamilton is curious when we consider his relations to the history of philosophy, and his novel and rich philosophical learning. His feeling for the past, and for the thinkers who had preceded him in the same field, was very marked. This led him to his extraordinary research into the history of opinions, which consumed so much of the best energies of his life. Careful in tracing philosophical opinions to their source, he was unwearied in verification, in sagaciously tracking back to first-hand authority. He has thus done a measure of justice to foregoing thinkers, revealed unknown treasures of thought, and shown in many instances the continuity of philosophical opinions. This work is wholly without a parallel in Britain. I do

Mansel, in *Cont. Review,* No. 21, 1867, p. 19. It was over this original edition that the self-complacent raised their shout of triumph.

[1] *Exploratio Philosophica,* by John Grote, B.D., p. 129.

not think that he has always mastered in their full reach and relations the systems to which he refers. His reading was probably too multifarious for this. When he gave special study to a system he mastered it, as, for example, that of Descartes and several others. At the same time he would have been the last man to dream of judging an author or determining his opinions by a formula called historical, which is to grasp all systems and fix the place of each. This is named, of course, a law of Reason, while Reason never knew it, and experience disavows it. It is a law, too, which cannot plead either intuitive consciousness or the test of necessity in its favour, and does not even possess inherent consistency. Yet this is the kind of criticism which we find confidently in these days applied to Hamilton. Its recommendation is of course that it saves the trouble of mastering the system to which it is applied, for if we know what in the course of philosophy a man at a given epoch must think, we are saved a great deal of reading of what he did think and say. Hence such phrases as that his philosophy is that of "the individual consciousness," "irreflective common-sense," "the ordinary understanding," &c. These and similar expressions, when they have any meaning, show simply that the people using them do not know what are the essential positions of Hamilton's philosophy. It is thus no wonder that we find him actually classed indiscriminately with Berkeley, Hume, and Mill, and so treated historically. Hamilton, above all men, deserves to be read, and needs to be studied before he is judged, or rather caricatured.

There was about Hamilton a sterling, open-eyed honesty. When he spoke of an outer world, its reality and vindication, he meant what he said. He had no subterfuge of new meanings or *aliases* under which he sought to keep by the terms while eviscerating the substance. He meant to hold by an Ego and a Non-Ego in the literal meaning of those terms, distinct, independent, neither determining, nor determined by, the other. When he spoke of personality and immortality, and sought philosophically to vindicate these, he did not palter with the convictions on which mankind act and must act. He meant, and he held by, a true personality, whose reality was not simply in some other or infinite reality, but a definite fact of human experience. Nor would he ever have thought of retaining the term immortality, if all that could be vindicated was only a corporate immortality; for he would have had the acuteness to see that an immortality of individuals, who in themselves have no guarantee of immortality, is simply a contradiction in terms. And he certainly would not have retained the word God in his philosophy, if he had believed God to be a mere development from Pure Being or Pure Nothing up to the Ego of "Reason," which in itself realises and constitutes all that is. When he had cast away the thing, he would not, through self-illusion, have retained the name.[1]

[1] See the emphatic protest of Ueberweg on this point—*History*, vol. ii. p. 521.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROBLEM, BRANCHES, AND METHOD OF PHILOSOPHY.

HAMILTON reaches his conception of the problem of Philosophy through his view of science as regulated by the principle of causality. In our ordinary knowledge, we are aware of a fact, or that something is. Science asks the question, How or why the fact is? In this it is impelled and guided by the need we feel of thinking a cause for each event. But the scientific step is only one in the direction towards which the causal need impels. Science is knowledge—a form of knowledge. Whence knowledge in this form? If we seek a cause of the fact of experience, we may, nay must, equally ask for a cause of our knowing the fact. Knowledge has its cause or source in what we call mind, and it is possible only under certain conditions. The primary problem of Philosophy is thus to investigate the nature and necessary conditions of knowledge,—the conditions of its own possibility. What is knowledge? What are the laws of knowledge? Such is Hamilton's conception of the problem of philosophy proper.

Keeping this in view, we can see how the philosophy of Hamilton rises to its highest question—that of the nature of our knowledge of the absolutely first, or of the unconditioned. The line of causality in finite things leads backwards and upwards to the problem of an ultimate or primary cause, and we have the points—is this a necessity of inference? is it an object of knowledge? in what sense is it an object of faith?

Philosophy, guided by the principle of causality, finds itself on the path which leads from effects to causes, and thus seeks to trace up "the series of effects and causes, until we arrive at causes which are not themselves effects." But these first causes, or the first cause, philosophy cannot actually reach. Philosophy thus remains for ever a tendency—a tendency unaccomplished. Yet in thought or theory it can be viewed as completed only when this unattainable goal is reached. Further, the higher we ascend in the line of causes, the less is the complexity—the nearer we are to simplicity and unity. But it is only in imagination that we can reach unity—"that ultimate cause, which as ultimate cannot again be conceived as an effect."

Hamilton may fairly be regarded as holding the belief in Unity to be a principle alongside of causality, though speaking of them as of the same origin. Following this principle, and ascending from generalisation to generalisation, we also tend to the one. "The conscious Ego, the conscious self, seems also constrained to require that unity by which it is distinguished in everything which it receives, and in everything which it produces."[1] Unity is the one great aim of our intellectual life. This is shown in perception, imagination, generalisation, judgment, and reasoning. And "reason, intellect (νοῦς),

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. III.

concatenating thoughts and objects into system, and tending always upwards from particular facts to general laws, from general laws to universal principles, is never satisfied in its ascent till it comprehend—what, however, it can never do—all laws in a single formula, and consummate all conditional knowledge in the unity of unconditional existence." [1]

Philosophy thus tends necessarily not towards a plurality of ultimate or first causes, but towards one alone. This first cause it can, however, never reach as an object either of immediate or positive knowledge. But as the convergence to unity in the ascending series of causes is manifest, in so far as our view extends, analogy forces us to regard it as continuous and complete. There is thus a philosophical belief in, though not a philosophical knowledge of, the ultimate or primary unity. We have here in brief both the positive and the negative aspect of his Metaphysic of the Absolute.

The essential points in Hamilton's philosophy at its highest reach lie in this outline,—virtually given in the opening metaphysical lectures. He there warns off what may be called pure thought, reason, or speculative intelligence, regarded as a faculty *per se*, as Kant and others since his time have viewed it, from the sphere of the first or unconditioned being or cause. At the same time, he marks off his doctrine from mere Agnosticism, —such as is represented by Mr Herbert Spencer, who simply ignores Hamilton's broad view of the problem. Spencer's theory is that the origin of natural law and things is absolutely inexplicable—incognisable. This

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. IV.

taken by itself is pure and simple agnosticism. Hamilton holds that Deity as a cause beyond which there is no cause,—a cause not conditioned,—is inconceivable by us, owing, however, simply to our limitation. He holds, also, that the *how* or *mode* of divine causality is not conceivable by us. In both cases the meaning would be best expressed by the term *incomprehensible.* This indicates simply an impossibility on our part of rising beyond the fact to the *how* of the fact. But this is not the whole of Hamilton's teaching. He holds at the same time that analogically, or on the ground of the personal and moral side of our consciousness, there is good reason for believing in a God at once personal, intelligent, causal, and moral. This is a totally different doctrine from that of a mere or pure agnosticism. His first or negative doctrine was meant simply to banish from the sphere of sound thought and accurate philosophy a theory of a God founded on "pure thought," divorced from experience, or above relation, which could be nothing in its primary nature but an unconscious impersonality, or the mere vague substance of all that phænomenally is.

As an object of pure thought or reason, the Unconditioned in the sense of an Absolute *per se*, or an Absolute made relative as a cause, so that, out of time, to begin with, this being may yet be conceived as necessarily flowing into time,—all this Hamilton regards as empty conception — as transcending real or positive thought; the latter view, indeed, as contradictory. There above time lies the mystery for mere intelligence, the mystery of the absolute beginning, and the mystery of the infinite regress of things; yet it is not inexplicable *how* this is a mystery to us,—when we have got a profound analysis of what our thought is, and how it is subject to time and relations. Hamilton is opposed to the "intellectual intuition" of Schelling, "the ideas" of Kant, "the pure being" of Hegel: but he is not less opposed to the dead negation or indifference of Comte or Spencer as to problems of origin; for he holds that the question of a first cause—of beginning—*must* come up in all normal minds for answer and solution; that the restriction of view to mere natural phænomena is the death of healthy thought and feeling—the quenching of the necessary and legitimate aspirations of philosophic faith.

One can quite well understand the hostility, even animosity, which a philosophy like that of Hamilton's has met with from Positivists, Pantheists, and Hegelians. The first dislike it because it raises the question of a Divine or first cause, defines the sphere within which it is cognisable, and points to the moral grounds which necessitate it by implication. This is a trouble to Positivism, because it wishes to restrict itself to sequences and coexistences between facts, and relegate the question of Deity to the sphere of the wholly incognisable and insoluble. It feels, too, that its regress of phænomena, neither capable of being pursued infinitely nor stopping absolutely, is a causeless absurdity,—a kind of nightmare under which it sleeps uncomfortably. To the Pantheist, again, Hamilton is equally repugnant. The pantheistic unity may be either a material substance underlying all, or it may be the so-called "idea," which is not yet either conscious or personal. But the process of development of the actual is alleged to be equally comprehensible on both schemes. This Hamilton denies, and charges the process in both cases with inherent absurdity; that the pantheistic unity can develop and yet remain one; that the impersonal can develop into the personal in any form; that the Hegelian "idea" can, being nothing, become aught—can become this, too, through a dialectic of contradiction which saps intelligibility, and yet professes to be comprehensible. He opposes equally all those schemes. He virtually says: This problem of origin and development cannot be solved by any process of pure thought, call it idea, substance, unconditioned, or knowledge of aught in itself, or above experience. We have no starting-point of this sort: for to intelligence, as a speculative question, the unconditioned is a mystery in any form; yet looking to experience,—looking to consciousness in all its breadth, to the facts and the implications of the moral data, the grounds of the moral life,—there is necessity for holding a personal God, partly revealed to us out of the intellectual mystery. This is repugnant to the narrow physicist, who makes knowledge convertible with uniform sequence of phænomena, and that even of a limited sort, the sensible; to the absolutist, who thinks he has got to the point whence he may know how the synthesis of subject and object has arisen. For him, of course, there is no mystery, or there ought to be none. He finds in the absolute Ego, which sees itself in everything, the solution of the problem of the universe. In this all contradictions are consciously reconciled, and truth lies in their remarkable unity.

The nature and proper scope of the principle of causality, the notions of simplicity and unity, and the relation of the ultimate unity to our dual experience, or the duality of being in experience,—these are questions which arise for discussion on Hamilton's view of the sphere and result of philosophy. But it is clear that the first thing requisite for all those questions is an analysis of knowledge itself,—its facts and its laws.

Mind, then, is the object of study in philosophy, and the three great questions regarding it are these :—

(1.) What are the facts or phænomena to be observed and generalised? This we may call the *Phænomenology of Mind*, or *Phænomenal Psychology.* It is commonly called simply *Psychology.*

(2.) What are the laws which regulate these facts, or under which they appear? or what are the necessary and universal facts—that is, laws by which our faculties are governed, and which afford criteria for judging or explaining their procedure? The answer to this question is found in the department of the *Nomology of Mind*, or *Nomological Psychology.*

(3.) We may ask what are the results or inferences which the facts of mind or consciousness warrant? Or what are the real results, not immediately manifested, which these facts or phænomena warrant us in drawing? The branch of philosophy which deals with this question is *Ontology* and *Metaphysics Proper.* Hamilton prefers to call it *Inferential Psychology.*

There is little difficulty in understanding what is included under Psychology. It is simply the observation, analysis, generalisation of the mental phænomena or manifestations, with a view to their reduction to ultimate faculties and capacities. There would be groups of phænomena, acts and states of mind, referred to ultimate or primary powers and susceptibilities.

Under the second head,—that of Nomology,—we must apparently include two sets of general facts or laws,—those which may be regarded as necessary and universal in consciousness or mind,—such as the laws of the understanding or faculty of thought proper, the primary laws of logic. But as there will be a nomology for every specific mental faculty and capacity,—such as the feelings and desires,—there will fall to be included under nomology not only necessary and universal laws, but laws generalised from experience. For it will hardly be maintained that the laws regulating the feelings or the desires are anything but generalisations from experience. Hamilton has not expressly distinguished the generalised and the universal in this connection, but obviously his practice supposes the distinction.

Under the third head,—that of Ontology or Metaphysics Proper,—we have what are called inferences or results. This points to an essential distinction in the doctrine of Hamilton. We may consider the facts of consciousness exclusively in themselves simply as facts. But we may also consider them as furnishing us with grounds of inference to something out of themselves.[1] For example, as effects they may lead us to infer the analogous character of their unknown causes; as phænomena, they may warrant us in drawing conclusions regarding the distinctive character of that unknown substance of which they are the manifestations. Inference and analogy may thus enable us to rise above the mere appearances of observation and experience. Thus

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VII.

we may infer the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, although these are not given us as phænomena, or objects of immediate knowledge.[1]

This is obviously a very important point. As Hamilton holds that even the Ego or self of consciousness is not an immediate object of knowledge, but inferred—apparently directly from the phænomena; and as he holds a similar view regarding material substance, these, the Ego and material substance, would form two of the results or inferences of ontology. The identity and immortality of the Ego would also be reached somehow as inferences or results. And lastly, the existence and attributes of Deity would be arrived at by the same method. These—the Ego, the World, God—would be the highest forms of being attainable by us. They would be the highest points of ascent in metaphysics proper or the science of being.

This division of philosophy was apparently that originally in the view of Hamilton when he commenced his course of lectures. But he has not in the arrangement of his lectures, nor indeed anywhere in his philosophical writings, adhered to it with any constancy in practice. And it would be impossible, perhaps, without doing some violence both to the development of his thinking and to some portions of his philosophy itself, to seek rigidly to force his speculations into the order of those departments. At the same time, this scheme affords a good general arrangement, under which his philosophical opinions may be set; and I shall endeavour, as far as I may, to keep this order in view in the present summary of his opinions.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VII.

The first question, then, is the psychological one,—What is mind as known to us? What is a mental fact or phænomenon? The answer to this is, it is a consciousness at least. A fact of mind is as it is known, and it is known only as there is consciousness of it. Mind as a mere potency is to us nothing.

The fundamental point—the main inspiration of the philosophy of Hamilton—is that philosophy is simply an explicit or articulate development of human consciousness. Consciousness in some form or other affords the possibility of experience,—is the ground of it, the limit and measure of it. Human experience, whether in the past or the present, is the expression for the consciousness of this or that individual in presence of the universe of fact and event. No form of knowledge transcends consciousness—no act of mind is realised by us as such without appearing as an object of consciousness.

> "In all legitimate speculation with regard to the phænomena of mind, it is consciousness which affords us at once (1) the capacity of knowledge; (2) the means of observation; (3) the point from whence our investigation should depart; (4) the limit of our inquiry; (5) the measure of its validity; and (6) the warrant of its truth." [1]

Hamilton's method is thus strictly reflective and analytic. It is in fact the method of analysis of the complete facts of consciousness, or mental experience, in the fullest sense of the term. It is directed, in the first place, to the phænomena of consciousness, as it now exists in its mature state, to the various mental acts and states of which we are conscious, and it proposes to reduce

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 929.

these to their utmost simplicity,—to find, in a word, the ultimate faculties and capacities of our mental constitution. Hence out of it arises the threefold classification of the powers of Cognition, Feeling, Desire and Will.

The best illustration of the analytic method as employed by Hamilton is perhaps to be found in his severance of the elements of External Perception, his distinction of Sensation and Perception, and his final analysis of what is truly and primarily the object of intuitive knowledge in sense. His treatment of the Laws of Association may also be cited as a good illustration. His method as applied to mind is philosophical, or if it be preferred, scientific—scientific in the best sense of the word.

The method is directed, in the second place, to find the universal facts or laws under which those powers are exercised, and through which we may be able practically to regulate and improve their exercise. These are what Hamilton pre-eminently regards as facts of consciousness. Under this head it will be found that Hamilton proposes to analyse and distinguish by certain tests what are primitive and elementary principles of knowledge, and what are secondary and derivative. He is at special pains to point out that principles which are mere generalisations from experience may be mistaken for necessary and universal laws,—that principles apparently intuitive may be really after all only derivative; in fact, one main portion of his philosophy lies in the attempt to reduce most of the necessary principles to a single universal fact in our consciousness—namely, that which he calls the impotency of the mind to compass the unconditioned or irrelative in any form. The philosophy of Common Sense is especially directed to distinguish what is really ultimate in our consciousness, and what is merely derivative and empirical. Hamilton's first rule is, "that no fact be assumed as a fact of consciousness but what is ultimate and simple." [1] No alleged fact of consciousness is such if it can be shown to be "a generalisation from experience," or a composite product of elements given in experience, capable of being sundered and reduced thus to prior elements.

"Whenever in our analysis of the intellectual phænomena we arrive at an element which we cannot reduce to a generalisation from experience, *but which lies at the root of all experience*, and which we cannot therefore resolve into any higher principle,—this we properly call a fact of consciousness. Looking to such a fact of consciousness as the last result of an analysis, we call it an *ultimate* principle; looking from it as the first constituent of all intellectual combination, we call it a *primary* principle. A fact of consciousness is thus a simple, and, as we regard it, either an ultimate or a primary datum of intelligence." [2]

Secondly, this ultimate priority supposes necessity. It must be impossible not to think it. By its necessity, truly realised, can we recognise it as an original datum of intelligence, and distinguish it from the product of generalisation and custom.

Thirdly, the fact as ultimate is given us with a mere belief in its reality. Consciousness reveals that it is, but not how or why it is; otherwise this knowledge would be prior, and we should need to go backwards until we reached the truly ultimate. [3]

It is thus that Hamilton speaks of the first principles of knowledge as *inconceivable;* better had he said *in-*

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XV. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid*

comprehensible.[1] As the true meaning of the conceivable and inconceivable is essential alike to the understanding of the method and the system, we must here explain it. Hamilton has clearly stated the meaning of the conceivable to be that of realising in the mind a concept or general idea say of *river*, *mountain*, *man*, by embodying the common attributes of each in an individual image or object. This is the most usual form of the conceivable. This always implies that the attributes embodied in the individual image are non-contradictory. In this lies the negative requisite of conceivability. The absolutely inconceivable arises when two contradictory attributes are sought to be embodied in one image or object of thought; as, for example, square-circle. We can put a meaning into each of these terms,—*square* and *circle*,—we know what we propose to think by square-circle, but we cannot actually think or conceive *square-circle*, because the attributes are contradictorily exclusive. And of course we cannot *believe* such a thing to be, or to be possible. As Hamilton has put it, we know what is sought to be united here,—that is, "the unity of relation;" but we cannot accomplish a "unity of representation."[2]

And this shows at once what Hamilton means when he speaks of our being unable to conceive something, or an object as possible. As he has himself expressly stated, by "possible" he means logically possible—possible in thought, as in a single image or unity of representation. Here are his words. Reid had said: "A man being able to conceive a thing is no proof that

[1] As he does elsewhere. See below, p. 106

[2] See *Reid's Works*, p. 377, note.

it is possible." On this Hamilton remarks, "Not certainly that it is *really possible*, but that it is *problematically possible*—*i.e.*, involves no contradiction; violates no law of thought. The latter is that possibility alone in question."[1] This application of the term *to conceive* is identical with the first,—is, in fact, simply the first stated in a negative form. We are unable to conceive as possible, as in thought one, an object with contradictory attributes. All else we can mentally represent. Mill raises this application of the verb *to conceive* into a second sense of the term, and actually supposes Hamilton to mean that the mind "could not realise the combination as one which could exist in nature;"[2] in other words, that we cannot believe the conception to be realised, because it is opposed to our limited experience of real or physical law. Hamilton has no such meaning or reference. What is possible in thought,—that is the point, and the deeper point; not what is believable in reality, or according to our notions of physical law. Mill's favourite illustration of the antipodes being for long unbelievable, because contrary to a limited experience, has nothing whatever to do with the matter. As a concept, *antipodes* is in Hamilton's sense perfectly possible; as a judgment of reality, it would be an improbable hypothesis to people with a limited experience. What is or is not believable at a given time, according to the existing amount of experience, has nothing to do with what is or is not conceivable on the abstract conditions of the thinkable.[3]

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 379, note †. [2] *Examination*, p. 32 (4th ed.)
[3] See Mill's whole chapter vi., where he parades his discovery of the three meanings of the conceivable.

It is thus clear that, logically, any two attributes which are non-contradictory may be mentally combined in one image. But there may be attributes which we know as a matter of fact are combined or coexist, while the mode or manner of their combination we cannot conceive. This Hamilton teaches. We may know that two things coexist, and yet not know how they do so,—that is, be able to conceive the manner of their coexistence: in his own words, to conceive the coexistence as possible. This Hamilton calls also the inconceivable, or incomprehensible. This is the sense in which he applies inconceivable, incomprehensible, to the first principles of knowledge. "A conviction is incomprehensible when there is merely given to us in consciousness *that its object is* (ὅτι ἔστι), and when we are unable to comprehend, through a higher notion or belief, *why or how it is* (διότι ἔστι)." [1]

The *why* or *how* would, in this case, be the reason or ground of the conviction, as well as the conception of the mode in which the subject and predicate of the conviction are conjoined. *I am conscious of an object*, may thus be a conviction or knowledge, though *how* I am so conscious I cannot say, or even conceive; how "I" and "conscious" are conjoined,—how "I," "conscious," and "object" are conjoined. To be unable to conceive as possible in this sense is not incompatible with knowing the fact; it is only incompatible with knowing the ground, reason, or cause of the fact. Unless this point is correctly apprehended, the key to Hamilton's distinction of Knowledge and Belief—indeed, to the whole of his philosophy of the Conditioned—is lost. And

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 754.

Mill is not the only critic who has groped and failed here.

This meaning or application of the term Conceivable readily connects itself with the primary sense as given by Hamilton. We refer an object to a class,—that is, we make it one with the class, through its common attribute. We thus conceive it under a general notion or head. We bring or subsume a particular proposition under a more general, as an instance of it. We thus conceive or comprehend it. We infer a consequent or conclusion in a reasoning from its antecedent or grounds. We thus comprehend it in its sequence or connection. But suppose we run back our notion to the most general or universal notion which we can form,—or our major proposition in the reasoning to the most general or universal proposition; and suppose, further, that we are thus face to face with what is universal or ultimate in knowledge,—then Hamilton would say we have reached the limit of the conceivable or comprehensible; for now, though we know, even apprehend, the ultimate notion or principle, it is not capable of being conceived as intelligibly connected with any notion or principle beyond itself. Let the point at which we arrive in this regress be, *I am conscious*, or *I am conscious of a non-ego*,—or *I am conscious of some being*,—Hamilton would say here we are at the incomprehensible,—not, be it observed, the incognisable; for while admitting this most general notion, fact, or truth, I have no means of conceiving or comprehending how I am conscious,—how I am conscious of self and not-self,—how I am conscious of something being. These are not cases of a higher notion; they are no doubt particular instances of universal principles or the highest notions; but these are the ultimate principles of all knowledge and intelligibility themselves.

And now we see clearly enough why Hamilton distinguishes between Knowledge and Belief, or philosophic faith. It is possible that, in the case of a combination of attributes, the mode of which we cannot conceive, we may yet believe that there is an explanation of the combination. We may even believe this at the ultimate point in the regress of knowledge. How I am, or come to be, a conscious being, I cannot, with only my own consciousness, conceive, but may suppose it explicable if another consciousness were, out of which mine arose. Or how, for example, there may be in one being the union of Personality and Infinity,—this I may not be able to conceive, and yet I may be at liberty to believe that somehow, unknown to me, such a combination is possible, even in fact. This is not impossible in reality, unless it can be shown that the attributes to be combined are truly contradictory; and this we cannot absolutely show in any case where the mode of combination alone is not explicable. The beginning of existence,—the first step in the being of the world and its laws,—may not be conceivable by me, yet I may be at perfect liberty to believe that a beginning of things and laws somehow there was. Nothing can bar my belief in such a beginning, except the proof that beginning and phænomenal being are absolutely contradictory. This is a point which no one, on any principle of philosophy, could possibly establish. Belief, therefore, Hamilton says, and says truly, is wider than knowledge; and knowledge pushed back, even in weariness, to its ultimate ground, means, suggests possibilities in which we may believe, and which yet we do not know.

And is there not an analogy to this in the advance of Science? When Science gets to a general law or an explanation of a fact—immediately higher than the fact—this fact is comprehended. The glass cracks under hot water, and this remains incomprehensible until it is found that bodies expand under heat. This, of course, is relatively incomprehensible; it is so until it is explained. But go back to the law of gravity, or the mutual attraction of the particles of bodies: this is, in the present state of scientific knowledge, inexplicable,—incomprehensible. We do not know how it is that bodies are thus mutually attracted. We may some day come to know this. But meanwhile we have but the general fact of the attraction, and the ground or mode of it is entirely inconceivable. In Hamilton's view there is at least a partially parallel case in certain of the first principles of knowledge. We know them, — cannot know without them,—but how they are and are so known to us we do not know.

In the case of physical law,—even what now appears to us the ultimate,—there is always a possibility of our surmounting our actual ignorance. There is no inherent or essential impossibility in getting to a higher knowledge, in the light of which physical laws, now ultimate to us, may stand as to mode clearly revealed. But what Hamilton maintains is, that there are ultimate principles in knowledge which we accept, and must accept, although we are wholly unable to reduce them to higher grounds,—to bring them under wider notions or more general principles. Of course what Hamilton here contends for is not a temporary but an essential incomprehensibility in the nature of knowledge. And this cannot be relevantly met by talk about inevitable states of mind regarding antipodes, ghosts, darkness, or precipices. The principle denied to be incomprehensible must be shown to be capable of reduction to a principle beyond, or wider than, itself. In the proof of this, the principle itself must not be assumed. In the proof which assails the ultimacy of the principle, no principles ought to be assumed which are not vindicable on grounds of ultimacy as first principles. Of all this Mill cannot be said to have even a glimpse; and in his attempted reduction of the antithesis of the Ego and non-Ego to a neutrum lower than or beyond both, he has violated every law of legitimate argument. He has assumed general principles as ultimate, without attempting to give a guarantee; and on the strength of these he has sought to show that a principle deeper than any of them—even one supposed in each—is derivative from them. It is almost superfluous to suggest that, had he been successful in showing that the antithesis of Ego and non-Ego is derivative, the whole problems of the reality and the guarantee of first principles remain exactly as they were,—in his case slurred, and misapprehended.

The criticism usually directed against Hamilton on the point as to the contradiction involved in saying that the Infinite or Inconditionate, as absolute or infinite, is inconceivable, and yet that we may, nay, must believe in it,—in one or other of its forms,—proceeds on the misconception now pointed out. There is nothing inconsistent in such a statement. We know perfectly what we mean when we use the terms *infinity* and *time*, or an *absolute commencement of time*, just as we know what we mean by two straight lines and by enclosing a space. But what we feel it impossible to do in imagination or in thought, in any form, is to conceive infinity and time, or an absolute beginning of time, in one image or in one concept. Yet we may believe that this combination of infinity and time is possible in reality. There may even be reasons which lead us to suppose that it is so, and that an absolute beginning of time is not really true. These reasons would lead to the positive belief in one of the alternatives, though this would never enable us actually to conceive how infinity and time are combined in one object of knowledge.

Hamilton's method, though thus obviously of the most analytic type, has been described as quite the reverse, and named "introspective." The suggestion here is that Hamilton's method, as "introspective," simply looks at the facts, real or supposed, of consciousness, as we now find it in its matured state, and does nothing in the way of attempting to answer the question as to how the present forms and laws of consciousness,—how its present contents, in a word,—have grown up. Hamilton is accused, moreover, of accepting as intuitive or original any fact or principle of consciousness, because, "in his opinion, he himself, and those who agree with him, cannot get rid of the belief in it." "A belief" is held, it is said, "to be part of our primitive consciousness,—an original intuition of the mind,—because of the necessity of our thinking it."

According to Mill, the fact of a principle or a belief being necessary in our present state of consciousness, is no proof that it is an original or primary principle. It may have grown up to this state of necessity. It may not have been originally a necessity of knowledge or belief; its necessity may, in a word, be accounted for by the influence of association,—inseparable association. It may be questioned, indeed, according to Mill, whether there are "any natural inconceivabilities." To appeal to present consciousness is of no use.

"We have no means of interrogating consciousness in the only circumstances in which it is possible for it to give a trustworthy answer. Could we try the experiment of the first consciousness in any infant,—its first reception of the impressions which we call external,—whatever was present in that first consciousness would be the genuine testimony of consciousness. . . . The proof that any of the alleged universal beliefs or principles of Common Sense are affirmations of consciousness, supposes two things,—that the beliefs exist, and that they cannot possibly have been acquired."[1]

Mill, further, emphatically approves Locke's method of seeking "the origin of our ideas," before going to our present consciousness to ascertain what and how many those ideas are,—in a word, seeking an explanation of the contents of consciousness, before ascertaining by observation of them what characters they actually present.

It is hardly necessary to point out to any intelligent and candid student of Hamilton's writing, that this description of his method as introspective has no foundation in fact. His method is as much "psychological" or analytic as that of Mill himself is, or any follower of the Associational Psychology. The only difference is, that Hamilton's use of the method is more philosophically and scientifically regulated than Mill's. The question is

[1] *Exam.*, chap. ix. p. 178.

not as to method, but as to the extent or degree to which analysis can go, the assumptions which it must make, and the guarantee of those assumptions.

In Psychology, or Phænomenal Psychology, Hamilton analyses our ordinary consciousness and beliefs rigidly and thoroughly, and seeks to show from what primary elements, as in External Perception, these have grown up. The difference on this and on other points of psychological science between Hamilton and Mill, for example, is truly as to the nature and number of the primary elements,—as to the doctrine or result of the analysis,—not as to the method itself. And in regard to the universal principles, facts, or conditions of consciousness, as Hamilton calls them, Mill entirely mistakes Hamilton's procedure. Hamilton gives, as we have seen, at least three specific rules for ascertaining these—viz., ultimacy, necessity, inexplicability. Under the first of these tests, Hamilton has distinctly laid down that the alleged ultimate fact of consciousness must be shown not to be "a generalisation from experience," or "the mere result of custom,"—not, in fact, to be a product simply of experience. And what else or other does Mill demand by his so-called psychological method, or by the need of showing that the principle "cannot possibly have been acquired by experience"? Would the operation, or his process of association, not be properly enough described as custom? And does not Hamilton constantly distinguish logical necessity from associational or customary connection?

But there is a more vital error on Mill's part than even this. This is shown in the following words :—

"He [Hamilton] completely sets at naught the only possible method of solving the problem [of the original facts of consciousnesss]. He even expresses his contempt for that method. Speaking of extension, he says: 'It is truly an idle problem to attempt imagining the steps by which we may be supposed to have acquired the notion of extension, when, in fact, we are unable to imagine to ourselves the possibility of that notion not being always in our possession.'[1] . . . That we cannot imagine a time at which we had no knowledge of extension, is no evidence that there has not been such a time."

If the author of this criticism had taken the trouble to master the method of Hamilton, which he so lightly contemns, he would have seen a meaning which he has not apprehended in the phrase, "that lies at the root of all experience,"—that is, "the condition of consciousness," "the condition of the possibility of knowledge," —and other similar expressions illustrating the test of ultimacy and simplicity. These phrases mean that we ought not to presuppose the notion or principle which we profess to generate out of experience in the experience itself, which is adduced as proof of its genesis. This is not only sound scientific method,—it is the very heart of it. And it is this principle which Mill himself perhaps violates more constantly than any other inquirer. But Mill supposes Hamilton to mean by this that "we cannot imagine a time at which we had no knowledge of extension," the truth being that Hamilton is pointing out that there is no possibility in thought of even conceiving any percept or sensation out of which the notion of space can be generalised, without therein assuming the notion of space itself. This is a position to be examined on its own grounds; but as a condition of sound method—call it philosophical or

[1] *Reid*, p. 882. [2] *Exam.*, chap. ix. p. 180.

scientific—it is indisputable. Hamilton enforces it not only under his test of ultimacy, but under that of inexplicability. And what more vital or searching test can we have of a derivative as opposed to an ultimate stage in our knowledge, than that of necessary implication? And it may be added, that the practical application of the test will show the *petitio principii* involved in Mill's attempted genesis of space out of sensations in time,—of the notion of the Ego and Non-Ego from what is supposed not to imply either,—and others of his characteristic doctrines.[1] It is even a peculiarity of the philosophy of Hamilton, that he applies this test of logical implication in the way of positive derivation of the principles of knowledge; for his corollaries of the Law of the Conditioned,—causality and substance,—are given by him as implicates of a higher or primary law. And whether we regard his deduction as correct or not, it was certainly a very important and a very scientific application of philosophical method, just as his attempt to generalise the ordinary facts of consciousness,—our acts and states of mind,—into groups, and refer them to ultimate powers, was in the line of sound psychological inquiry and progress. All this has for its aim and spirit the unity of knowledge and truth.

The view that the consciousness of the infant being is the only genuine, is somewhat ridiculous. As has been well said,—

"It is wholly contrary to all analogy, and therefore to all *primâ facie* probability, that consciousness alone of all our natural properties needs no development, no education. We

[1] On this point see an able criticism in *The Battle of the Two Philosophies*, p. 57 *et seq.*

know that our senses require education ere we can obtain from them genuine testimony: why are we to assume that, in the case of consciousness, this is only to be had when it is in that half-awakened, vague, indistinct state in which it exists in the infant, and that in its full energy it is necessarily deceptive?"[1]

It would, indeed, be about as sensible and scientific to seek to ascertain the future form and symmetry of the tree—to divine the idea of trunk, branch, and leaf —from the hidden potency of the germ alone. It is the study of the mature development in the first instance which can guide us to the elements and the original constituents. Certainly the view which would give the first place to "the origin of ideas" and of the contents of consciousness, is about as unscientific a conception as could well be imagined. Stated broadly, it is an absurdity. We are to inquire into the original causes of facts which we have not scrutinised,—which we do not even know to exist, or which we know only in a haphazard way; and if we set out with the distinction, as Mill seems to propose, of "our acquired ideas," and an inquiry into their origin,[2] we must ask him for the test for discriminating between the acquired and the original ideas, which is exactly what we are supposed to be in quest of, by the method he proposes. Don't examine the facts—seek the causes first, is a new version of scientific method.

But let us look for a moment at the actual working of this so-called "psychological" method as opposed to that named "introspective." The former proposes to show

[1] *Battle of the Two Philosophies*, pp. 52, 53.
[2] *Exam.*, chap. ix. p. 177.

how all our knowledge of matter, mind, logical and metaphysical principles of the utmost necessity and universality, is developed out of *sensation.* Now what is *sensation?* It is at least, and at most, a state of consciousness. It is not here pretended that this is developed in an intelligible process from anything lower. How is it got then,—how is it known to be, —but by introspection — internal observation? In what way, then, are we to speak of a psychological method as different from, and superior to, one of introspection, seeing the latter lends to the former its very basis?

But there is more here. We find that when this superior and primary "psychological" method is to be applied to the simple case of the genesis of the notion of externality and the material world, it cannot take a step without certain postulates. It must be allowed to suppose "the human mind capable of expectation,"—the laws of the "association of ideas" leading to inseparable association. These imply time and succession,— and laws regulating sequence. These, then, are not generated. What gives them or guarantees them? If they are found as facts of mind, what is the method of doing so but introspection? With such assumptions as these before him, in an elementary case like the genesis of the notion of externality, how can Mill profess to say that all our knowledge arises from sensation? His method has not only begged or borrowed them from introspection, but it has borrowed them in a clumsy way without analysis of them,—without seeing what is already involved in them,—without seeing that no one could possibly take a more suicidal position than he himself does. These assumptions are utterly inconceivable *per se.* Sensation is *known* sensation,—it is a consciousness at least. It cannot be known apart from relations of unity, difference, &c.—involved in its very knowledge. It implies a sentient, as much as association implies an associator. It implies time and sequence. It, in fact, is only possible in knowledge, as it is possible in our knowledge, and as it involves all the essential laws of knowledge. Mill's peculiar method is, *Give me the first principles of knowledge, and I shall evolve the genesis of knowledge.*

Objection may be taken to the analytic method of psychology on the side of what is called the "transcendental" method or "transcendental deduction." We find in Kant,—at least in the 'Critique,'—a certain setting aside and depreciation of the psychological method of observation and analysis of the mind. In this, of course, he is utterly inconsistent, because no one can dispense with it, and he himself actually employs it in a partial way. We are all now tolerably familiar with his famous question as to how experience is possible; and it is with a view to give a complete answer to this question that he has recourse to "transcendental deduction." As to what he precisely aimed at in this method, and as to the true character of the method itself, his followers and commentators are obviously very far from a common understanding. This, however, seems to be clear, that at the outset of the 'Critique,' Kant did not apply psychological observation and analysis to test Hume's position of the limitation of intuitive apprehension or external perception to impressions,—mere states of consciousness. He accepted this limitation, but sought to show that in order to constitute sensation or impression an object of knowledge, more than itself is required,—viz., time, space, category, which are purely mental or *a priori.* When we come, however, to examine what *object* or *objective* with Kant means in this connection, we find that it is simply that the naked material called *impression* is to be set under necessary and universal connections or relations. It is therefore in one important aspect as much subjective—*i.e.*, a mere state of the consciousness—with Kant as with Hume. It is objective only in the sense of being clothed in certain *a priori* forms and categories,—certain mutual relations, and relations to the unity of the Ego as apperceptive or truly conscious. If this be the whole of Kant's work, it is not much, and we are as far off from knowing the possibility of experience as we were before. For experience would simply mean a necessary context of subjective impressions,—the reality of the world, of the soul, of God Himself, being left wholly undetermined. If it be Kant's aim to show the possibility of experience, in the ordinary sense of the term, on the basis of Hume's limitation of knowledge, *plus* time, space, and category, as pure forms of consciousness, his attempt is necessarily a failure. A real or independent world, a real or true unity of the Ego, Kant could not reach on any such method. When, therefore, people speak of his showing or deducing the possibility of experience, they are using a wholly ambiguous expression,—the experience whose conditions are supposed to be deduced being in no way necessarily like the experience which we know in consciousness, whether intuitive or inferential. Kant, in abandoning the psychological method, could not consistently tell us, in the first place, what experience is, or what experience he was speaking of, and whose possibility he was seeking to deduce. If he thought that he could by his method reach even the conditions of our ordinary experience,—sifted, tested, and analysed,—he was mistaken. In abandoning the psychological method, he threw away the key to the door of his prison-house, and then deluded himself with the idea that by making a circuit of the walls he could reach the open air.

As to the transcendental method itself, it might be readily shown that, whether it be regarded as a process of logical subsumption, or a constructive, synthetic process, it is illogical, inconsistent, and useless. There can be no logical subsumption of anything, or matter of experience, under either form or category,—time, space, causality, or whatever the *a priori* notion be,—unless the matter subsumed is already apprehended as possessing the feature of the form or category—as, *e.g.*, in time or as a cause; and if this be so, the matter subsumed is already constituted under form or category, and not left to the mind to do it for the first time. There is apprehension of relation existing,—not the imposition of relation not yet existing. Besides, there is no knowledge of pure form or category on the one side, and (naked) matter on the other. Though virtually assumed, it is absolutely impossible; for there would thus be knowledge ere it is constituted. Even if there were, there would be no means whatever of subsuming the matter given under different categories. How could we in such a case distinguish what is to be subsumed under time alone, or time and space together, or under succession, coexistence, causality, or substance? Obviously only arbitrarily and irrationally.

Divorce the reason or sum of the principles of pure knowledge from the understanding, and set these faculties apart, as Kant does,—then there is no possibility of uniting them, or through their union constituting human knowledge, or any object of intelligibility.[1]

But the transcendental method, interpreted as one of synthetic construction, is perhaps more completely self-contradictory than the view of it now represented. The true transcendental method is represented as synthetic; it adds to the element — say impression — something besides itself, something beyond itself, or from without. As element merely, the impression does not exist for us as conscious beings,—is, in fact, meaningless until the elements *ab extra* are added to it. The transcendental method is thus a creation of knowledge or experience. It is further a creation out of nothing; for the added elements—viz., time, space, category—make the meaningless or non-existent impression of something,—an object; and we have thus disclosed to us the process of the origination of experience. This is possible only through *a priori* construction so carried on. Now, be it observed that the transcendental method as thus interpreted professes to prove, or deduce, or show to be necessary, each of the specified elements of the complete whole called knowledge of an object. It professes to do this also, starting from the

[1] The above was written before the appearance of Dr Hutchison Stirling's *Text-Book to Kant*. I am gratified to find that his view is in substance the same. The reader would do well to refer to his lucid and admirable exposition of Kant's system generally.

impression or sensation. Now the impression is not known *per se*,—does not exist for us at all as an intelligible or even conscious object; for we have no object of knowledge or consciousness, unless as we are conscious of the whole transcendental apparatus brought to bear on the impression, and so make it cognisable. In these circumstances, I maintain that it is absolutely impossible for us ever to reach an object of knowledge or intelligibility at all. We cannot start from an impression as a datum from which to deduce or establish the necessity of other elements—viz., time, space, and category; and this for the obvious reason that the datum—the impression *per se*—is confessedly meaningless and non-existent even in consciousness. A ground of proof or intellectual process, which is meaningless, is no ground of proof. You cannot show anything further to be necessary to a meaningless element, non-existent in knowledge. And the same holds true of any other element in the complex whole supposed to be capable of affording a starting-point for the deduction, or of proving the necessity of the other elements. Let time *per se*, or space or category *per se*, or self *per se*, be the alleged starting-point, there is no possibility of proving anything else to be necessary to it or involved in it, for the simple reason that there is as yet, by supposition, no object of knowledge. Transcendental deduction, as thus interpreted, is no process of proof of the necessity of other elements besides sensation, or besides anything else from which it starts, to constitute knowledge. As a process of construction it is entirely futile. It not only fails to vindicate our right to use the necessary principles of knowledge, it wholly fails to connect the one side of our knowledge with the other. If this be the method of the "articulation of consciousness," it is an articulation without joints.

And yet this method is alleged as proving, demonstrating against Hume and his impressional theory, that the impression *per se* is not only unfit to be the basis of knowledge or experience, but even that it is meaningless,—no object of consciousness, non-sensical. Do not the upholders of the transcendental method see that the impression *per se* is equally meaningless to them as to him?—that if it is meaningless as a ground of constructing knowledge with him, it is not less meaningless for them, as utterly empty and naked? The impression *per se* may be meaningless, but then it is unfit to be the subject of a proposition, or to have any definite correlative. In a word, the transcendental method, if it is to do anything at all, must be able to create both its ground and itself out of nothing. It must ascend, in a word, to the vagaries of "pure thought," and its spontaneous determinations, as Hegel vainly imagines he reveals them.

Obviously the analytic method of Hamilton is a great deal deeper than any so-called transcendental deduction, as it is also free from hypothetical metaphysical formulæ, which foreclose the law of the facts. Psychology is necessary as affording not only a knowledge of what is to be deduced,—of that experience whose conditions are sought,—but of the method of all intelligible deduction,—of every act which professes to evolve with consciousness one thing from another. Every rational method is thus conditioned by psychology and its data. It cannot take a step without these; it can otherwise know neither what it seeks nor the road it takes.

In the application of the analytic method to philosophy—especially to the question of Hume's limitation of knowledge—the way is quite clear, and the principle sound. When it is said that knowledge, to begin with, is an impression, a consciousness, it must be on the ground simply of psychological observation and analysis. But if the statement rests on an appeal to the ultimate in consciousness, so does the denial of it on the psychological method. This question of fact must thus be settled on the process of evidence proper to the case. This is the method of Reid, and it is that of Hamilton,—the latter carrying out the analysis with far greater precision and rigour than the former. Then if Hume's statement be a traditional one,—or a hypothetical one, taken up on the authority of previous philosophers,—it still falls to be tested by psychological observation and experiment. No one is at liberty to assert a matter of fact simply on authority, when it is open to testing, much less so to lay down a principle in philosophy. Further, applying the same method, Hume's system, as that of any other thinker, may be tested by the principle of consistency or non-contradiction. Hume could not object to this—for in reasoning at all he postulates this principle; and an incoherent system is a false system. This test has been applied to the system alike by Reid and Hamilton. Further, it is quite competent, on the analytic method, to show, in regard to the principle of Hume's or any other system, that it involves, by necessary implication, more than its author allows, or than is provided for in the system. It is a complete misconception to hold that this process is competent only to a method of "transcendental deduction." On the contrary, the use of reasoning to implication by this method might be properly challenged as seeking to connect the non-empirical with the empirical, — what is not got from experience with experience itself. But the procedure is quite competent from one form of experience to another, —from an act to an agent,—from a series of changes to an underlying permanent. These are simply applications of the philosophical method of Hamilton, and looked at merely as modes of procedure in seeking truth, they are thoroughly legitimate. How far they have been successfully carried out is another matter, and one of detail, which can be ascertained only by a comparison of the conflicting philosophical systems, and a minute examination of the philosophy of Hamilton.

There is a talk in some quarters of the insufficiency of subjective certainty or assurance, and the need for an objective one. But the answer has already been given.

> "The *necessity* we find of assenting or holding is the last and highest security we can obtain for truth and reality. The necessary holding of a thing for real is not itself reality: it is only the instrument, the guarantee of reality. It is not an objective, it is only a subjective, certainty."[1]

Objective certainty, or the certainty of objective existence, can mean only that

> "I, the subject, must hold the thing known for objectively existent,—that is, I have but the highest subjective certainty. Any other certainty is unattainable, even contradictory, for human thought. A subject cannot be any otherwise certain

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 800.

than that it is certain. To be objectively certain, in the sense here indicated, the subject must be both itself and the object, and, as such, be able to become certain. Yet certainty has no meaning except as in a subject." [1]

In other words, the last ground of appeal in knowledge is, I am conscious of being constrained to think a fact —a truth—a series of truths related. Necessary relation may be the object of thought, but the guarantee of the necessity is still my consciousness of this necessity,—my subjective assurance of what is necessary and universal. That is, in other words, the last ground of appeal of the doctrine of Common-Sense,—the meaning of Instinctive or Primary Belief.

There is a habit of writing about such divergent thinkers as Locke and Leibnitz which characterises their philosophy as "individualist." Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and Hamilton are all classed under the same vague and assumptive phraseology. The meaning seems to be, that the systems of these thinkers accept as a fact the existence of the concrete thinking-subject, and endeavour to show how this subject, as an individual consciousness, is related to the wider universe of which he forms a part. Or how the varied contents of the experience of the individual are to be accounted for, and what certainty attaches to his subjective consciousness of things. This is apparently to be regarded as the true aim and method of the very different philosophers just enumerated. Looking at the really different systems of those thinkers, it seems amazing to find them grouped together, and grouped in such a category.

The true or metaphysical way of looking at philosophy

[1] Hermes quoted, *Reid's Works*, pp. 800, 801.

as opposed to the individual or psychological is said to be asking a question of this type: What is the nature of the relation between the individual himself, as one part of the system, and the system as a whole? Supposing now that questions of this sort are put—how, I ask, are they to be answered? By what method? Can they be answered by any method which is not one of individual or subjective certainty in the first instance? How can any solution of the question of my relation to the system of things of which I am, or suppose myself, a part, be given which does not fall to be tested by my consciousness or thought as an individual? or how otherwise can I solve the question, what is the nature or meaning of my own existence, or of the existence of things around me? Nay, if I have no guarantee of my own conscious existence in the first place, how can such questions be put, or how can I put such questions at all? What could the solution of them be after all, but the conceptions which I, an individual conscious thinker, may be able to form of myself or things—of the whole of things, and of my relations to them? And supposing that these very individual conceptions are proved to be common to mankind, what certainty could I have of this but the certainty which is in my consciousness as an individual? And then am I not exactly where I was?—still in face of the question as to whether and how far my knowledge thus guaranteed is convertible with the absolute, permanent, self-abiding reality of things? Can we ever transcend subjective certainty? Is not the question of philosophy, How far can this certainty carry us or assure us? and that whether we ask how the contents of actual experience grow up in the individual, or what the individual is, or how he is related to the whole of things.

What is this knowledge of the infinite, absolute, or universal beyond, before, and in the individual, but the individual's conception of the infinite, absolute, and universal? And why should this or that individual suppose that his conception means more than just the conception which, as an individual, he is capable of forming? or that it is anything but an individualised infinite, or absolute—that is, something representative of the transcendent Infinite or Absolute?

CHAPTER III.

CONSCIOUSNESS—ITS NATURE AND CONDITIONS—MENTAL LATENCY.

THOUGH Hamilton states Phænomenal Psychology as first in the order of the branches of philosophy, his treatment of the subject in the 'Lectures' leads him naturally to deal with what may be called the Nomology, or doctrine of the laws of consciousness in general. The mental facts or phenomena are embraced by him in one general word—consciousness. He regards all the special phenomena as simply forms or facts of consciousness.

"Consciousness is to the mind what extension is to matter or body. Though both are phænomena, yet both are essential qualities, for we can neither conceive mind without consciousness, nor body without extension." [1] To state its meaning generally meanwhile, it may be described as "the knowledge that I, or the Ego, or self, exists in some determinate state." It is only in this knowledge that mental phænomena are for us,—are, in fact, at all. With this they appear,—*i.e.*, become phænomena; with this they disappear,—cease to be phænomena. Hence in a systematic exposition it is

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. IX.

natural to prefix a statement of the laws or conditions of consciousness itself, for all the special phænomena must be more or less regulated by those laws. If there be necessary laws or conditions, these will extend to all the phænomena, and will require to be summarised. The classification of the phænomena themselves, and the general or generalised laws, fall to be subsequently exposed. This science may be called the Nomology of Consciousness, and will form the introduction to Psychology proper or Phænomenal Psychology.

Hamilton obviously distinguishes, though he does not separate, consciousness from the definite act in which it is manifested. The former, or general consciousness, he regards as the immediate basis or form of all possible knowledge. He finds it, or he realises himself in it, and he regards it as impossible to say how it has arisen, what are the conditions under which it is possible. But with regard to any definite act of consciousness,—be it perception, sensation, judgment, volition,—he professes to be able to find by psychological method "the universal conditions under which alone such an act is possible." These universal conditions are exemplified in the determinate or individual acts of consciousness, and they are known from a study and comparison of the acts. But *how* they are or arise, we cannot tell. They are the ultimate for us, constituting the essence of the very intelligence which illegitimately seeks to know their genesis.

How consciousness is possible is an unphilosophical question, in so far as it points to determining this possibility by consciousness itself. We cannot explain *how* we come to be conscious of self, of mental states, of external objects, by any process of consciousness, for the obvious reason that we assume our being conscious as the means of explaining how we are conscious at all, or how we come to be conscious. Consciousness in one or other definite manner is for us the primary revelation,—the alpha of our being. It is a revelation and a constitution of existence, in the strictest sense of these terms, of us, but not by us. We exist, and we know we exist, only in as far as for the first time we consciously energise. This does not, be it observed, preclude questions about the growth of the contents of consciousness. These are psychological questions, and quite within the competency of research; but the explanation of how there is consciousness at all, or in any form, this is unphilosophical,—inexplicable by consciousness itself. Consciousness is the first, the last, the abiding mystery of being.[1]

This problem is virtually attempted by writers who make use of such phrases as,—How is knowledge possible? What are the ultimate conditions of knowledge? These questions are quite legitimate,—are, in fact, the questions of Reid, Hamilton, and Cousin, in the sense of being simply proposals for the analysis of the consciousness in which we are revealed to ourselves,—in which any knowledge is realised. Hamilton's "conditions" or "limitations" of consciousness refer to the possibility of it in a good and sound sense. They are adduced after analysis of the fact,—after the experimental tests of doubt and non-contradiction,—as the common or universal and necessary elements of knowledge,—those elements apart from which we may try to

[1] See *Reid's Works*, pp. 930, 746, 801.

think knowledge but cannot. But these are originally psychological data, as much as the contingent experiences in which they are manifested, and which they condition. They are found by testing facts to be necessary and universal in the first instance, and as such they are recognised as laws. In this sense, but in this only, can we speak of showing how knowledge or consciousness is possible; it is seen to be possible only as certain essential conditions of it, for which we have but its own warrant, are fulfilled in our experience.

To attempt to explain thinking by thinking, or knowledge by knowledge, is in its last resort reasoning in a circle. To know *how* we know is to know,—to assume that we can and do know, and know truly. But if we know in knowing how we know, we have assumed knowledge as a fact, and as a validity, in order to explain the fact and its validity. To explain knowledge, or to show the possibility of knowledge in this sense, is an absurdity. We assert knowledge, and we assert true knowledge, or knowledge as a valid instrument of knowing. Our explanation thus, whatever it be, is valid only on the supposition that knowledge there is, which does not need explanation.

Further, the metaphysical possibilities of knowledge, —subject and object, substance, cause, &c.,—are only possibilities in the sense that our knowledge of objects is limited to such as stand in one or other of those specifiable metaphysical relations. Before experience, however, we know nothing of them, or of their possibility. We find them in concrete forms. We find them necessary. We generalise and class them as matter of knowledge. But to pretend to explain *how* we think or know under the relation of subject and object, or indeed of any metaphysical relation, is a vain dream, and the result merely of confusion as to the use of words. Again, to state analytically or psychologically the elements necessarily involved in any act of knowledge is not to explain the act or its possibility, but only to state in detail elements of whose coming together we know nothing. It is, in fact, an ideal analysis of elements never given separately, and of whose actual synthesis, therefore, we can give no account.

"How consciousness in general is possible; and how, in particular, the consciousness of self and the consciousness of something different from self are possible; in what manner we can have a consciousness of any absolute[1] affection of the thinking subject, and a consciousness of self in representative relation either to an external possibility or to a previous act of consciousness;—all these questions are equally unphilosophical, as they all equally suppose the possibility of a faculty exterior to consciousness and conversant about its operations. But all philosophy of mind, if it does not wander into the region of hypothesis, must employ consciousness as the only instrument of observation. Consciousness gives us the existence both of the absolute and of the relative affections of the mind; and it gives all these as facts equally ultimate and inexplicable."[2]

To explain how consciousness as in us arises has been essayed on the part of the cerebro-psychological philosophy; but, as might be shown, without effect. The method is as much *ab initio* null as the method by consciousness itself. From unconscious nerve-moments we cannot show the passage into consciousness. They may precede constantly, uniformly; their transmutation

[1] Absolute as opposed to representative. [2] *Reid's Works*, p. 930.

into consciousness is inconceivable—that is, we cannot show how the conscious rises out of the unconscious. If consciousness is to explain its own origin, it must assist at, even preside over, its own creation and evolution.

Viewing consciousness, then, on Hamilton's method, what is revealed to us? Take any special consciousness or experience. I know, I feel, I desire. What is necessarily involved in each of these? This, that when I know, I *know* that I know; when I feel, I *know* that I feel; when I desire, I *know* that I desire. Without this common element, there would be neither knowledge, feeling, nor desire.

"And this knowledge, which I, the subject, have of these modifications, of my being, and through which knowledge alone these modifications are possible, is what we call *consciousness*. . . . Consciousness is thus the recognition by the mind or Ego of its acts and affections; in other words, the self-affirmation that certain modifications are known by me, and that these modifications are mine."[1]

Though the simplest act of mind, consciousness expresses a relation subsisting between two terms,—an I or self being the subject of a certain modification, and some modification belonging to the subject. Consciousness thus in its simplicity necessarily involves three things: 1. A knowing subject; 2. A known modification; 3. A knowledge of the subject of the modification.[2] These points Hamilton holds to be given by philosophical analysis, by reflection, or the attempt to realise clearly and distinctly what consciousness is, or what the simplest experience is.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XI. [2] *Ibid.*

We thus at the outset meet with the fundamental distinction of the subject of mind proper, and the state or phænomenon. This distinction is essential to the conscious act. But we must avoid ambiguity here. The phænomena of mind are not to be understood as appearances in the popular sense of that term,—such things as seem only to be, as opposed to what truly exists. They exist truly and really. They are phænomena, realities as opposed to what does not exist, or is not observed to exist. They are not seeming things in the sense of being merely illusory appearances of real phænomena or presentations. They are really and truly existent things for us, and the standard according to which we must try all illusory appearances,—*simulacra* of phænomenal reality.

Phænomenal reality is also, we must note, opposed to absolute existence,—the existence of that which subsists *per se*, that is, what is absolutely without attributes, absolute substance. It is opposed also to the existence of an absolute subject, or that which subsists under phænomena, and yet is supposed to be known in itself apart from or otherwise than through the phænomena.[1] Whatever view may be taken in regard to the contrast between absolute reality and relative existence, Hamilton holds explicitly that existence is known by us,—known, too, directly or immediately in or under relation to our faculties, their number, constitution, and laws.

But the phænomena or states of consciousness are somehow essentially and inseparably related to a Self, Ego, or Subject. This is, properly speaking, the mind.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VIII. p. 149.

The phænomena are mental; they are phænomenal of the mind. Mind is "the subject of the various internal phænomena of which we are conscious, or that subject of which consciousness is the general phænomenon."[1] This subject is, moreover, one; it is recognised as one, while the various phænomena are changing, passing. This affords the contrast of subject and object.

"Subject denotes the mind itself; subjective that which belongs to or proceeds from the thinking subject. Object, on the other hand, is a term for that about which the knowing subject is conversant,—what the schoolmen have called the *materia circa quam;* while objective means that which belongs to or proceeds from the object known."[2]

Here the question arises,—What precisely is the relation of knowledge between the Ego and the non-Ego, or the subject and object of consciousness? Hamilton holds, that while the state or act of consciousness is known directly and immediately, the subject of the state, the conscious subject is not so known. We know directly the phænomena of matter and of mind; but the subject, in the sense of that which subsists under these phænomena, we do not know directly or apprehend. Nor do we know this subject in the sense of substance or that which subsists by itself apart from the phænomena. Indeed he tells us explicitly that

"mind and matter as known and knowable are only two different series of phænomena or qualities; mind and matter as unknown and unknowable are the two substances in which these two different series of phænomena or qualities are supposed to inhere. The existence of an unknown substance is only an inference we are compelled to make, from the exist-

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[1] *Metaphysics,* L. IX. [2] *Ibid.*

ence of known phænomena ; and the distinction of two substances is only inferred from the seeming incompatibility of the two series of phænomena to coinhere in one."[1]

He connects this statement with the general principle, that of existence, absolutely and in itself, we know nothing. Our whole knowledge of mind and matter is only relative.[2] Still a basis, unknown in itself, alike of the mental and material phænomena, is "supposed," "inferred," naturally and necessarily. To maintain that mind and matter have no substantial existence is

"to belie the veracity of our primary beliefs ; it leaves unsatisfied the strongest necessities of our intellectual nature ; it admits as a fact that the phænomena are connected, but allows no cause explanatory of the fact of their connection."[3]

It follows from what has been said of the connection between a mental phænomenon and consciousness, that the latter is coextensive with or the genus of all the mental phænomena. In other words, if consciousness be regarded as a power of knowledge, it is a general power, not a special one. Perhaps it would be best to keep by the expression that consciousness is the general condition of the mental phænomena, — that without which none of them is a phænomenon for us. Hamilton strongly insists on this view, and criticises Reid rigorously for holding, as he alleges, that consciousness is a special faculty of knowledge. According to Hamilton, Reid, following Hutcheson, and followed by Stewart, Royer-Collard, and others, makes consciousness a special faculty of knowledge, co-ordinate with the other special

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VIII. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

faculties, such as perception and memory, and distinguishes consciousness from each of these, as he distinguishes each of these from the other. He also attributes to Reid the doctrine that the peculiar object of consciousness is each operation of mind,—say perception, memory, imagination,—to the exclusion of the objects of those acts.

Now Hamilton very strongly objects to this view or alleged view of Reid. (1.) Consciousness cannot be really distinguished from the special faculties of knowledge; that is, consciousness is not unless as a special faculty is exercised. (2.) No one of these can be really discriminated from consciousness—that is, there is no exercise of a special faculty apart from consciousness. (3.) It is impossible to conceive a faculty of knowledge which is cognisant of a mental operation and not cognisant of its object. With regard to the first point, we know (*i.e.*, feel, perceive, remember, imagine, &c.) only as we know that we feel, perceive, remember, &c. *I know* and *I know that I know* are not two distinct acts, but one and the same act of mind. I cannot know without knowing that I know—*i.e.*, feel, perceive, remember. There is no consciousness for me apart from some specific act of knowledge. I must be perceiving, remembering, imagining, if I am conscious at all. Secondly, I cannot exercise any act of knowledge,—perceiving, remembering, imagining,—without at the same time and in the same act being conscious of it. There is no special faculty in exercise, apart from consciousness. Thirdly, I cannot be conscious of the act of knowledge,—say perception,—without being conscious of the object perceived. I cannot be conscious of remembering without being conscious of the object of memory —*i.e.*, the picture in the mind, and so of imagination. For, (1.) In that case there would be two acts in perception: there would be the perception with its object, the outward quality; there would be the consciousness with its object, the inward act—the perception. (2.) If we were conscious of the act and not conscious of the object at the same time, we could not tell what sort of act we are conscious of. It is the object which gives its character to the act; and without a consciousness of it, we could not tell whether the act is perception, memory, or imagination. Unless I am conscious of the object perceived, I cannot say that I perceive at all, and I cannot say that the perception is of a rose, or a table, or a chair.

On these grounds, Hamilton holds consciousness to be the general power of knowledge, — not a special power, but the genus or highest class, containing under it as species all the other powers of knowledge. It is probable, however, that Reid and others use consciousness in a narrower sense than Hamilton. They mean by it chiefly, if not exclusively, self-consciousness, or the recognition by the mind or self of its own acts and states, with the implicate of a self somehow subsisting permanently in those acts and states. This, no doubt, is to contemplate consciousness in one only of its aspects; and it is rather this exclusiveness of view which is to be censured, than any general or positive misconception of the sphere of consciousness, regarded in its relations universally to the mental acts and their objects. This self-consciousness of Reid and Stewart is almost convertible with voluntary or reflective consciousness, which makes the acts its matter of contemplation, without special reference to the objects, but without expressly denying that consciousness in the general sense extends to acts and objects alike. Of course the propriety of applying the term self-consciousness to an act which is only by inference, even if immediate inference, cognisant of the self, is open to question. But this criticism would apply to Hamilton's oft-repeated doctrine on this point as well as to that of Reid and Stewart.

This doctrine of the inseparability of the conscious act of knowledge and its object, might have been left to its self-evidence, had it not been for the extraordinary misconception of Hamilton's doctrine on the point to be found in Mill's criticism. This is a part of his general misunderstanding of the distinction between Immediate and Mediate knowledge, to which the doctrine of the inseparability of the conscious act and object is closely related.

Mill charges Hamilton with giving two irreconcilable "definitions" of consciousness. Hamilton, of course, expressly tells us that consciousness is in any proper sense of the term indefinable. It can, as he explains, only be "philosophically analysed."[1] "Its most general characteristics" or characteristics can be stated; and these are to be realised by reflection, each man for himself. But what are the two so-called "definitions"? The first or most general characteristic is "the recognition by the thinking subject of its own acts or affections." This is consciousness itself. Later, Hamilton states as a feature of the act of consciousness "that it is an immediate or intuitive knowledge, and that this holds of every act of

[1] Metaphysics, i. [illegible]

consciousness." Consciousness is always of what is now, or of what is now and here. This may be a percept, or a picture of what is no longer now, or now and here. The consciousness is of the picture or representation. This is immediate knowledge; but the picture may hold up to the mind a past object. The knowledge of the past through the present is mediate knowledge. How can these statements be regarded as incompatible? Is it not held that the apprehension of the act or affection of the mind is intuitive or immediate? How, then, is this irreconcilable with the statement that the act of consciousness is intuitive?

But Mill seeks, by putting a meaning of his own into Hamilton's words, to bring out an inconsistency. Hamilton holds, that in some acts of consciousness,—as perception,—we apprehend immediately not only the act, but the object of the act. We perceive only as we are conscious, and we perceive only as we perceive the object. How is this inconsistent with the statement that the conscious act is immediate or intuitive? or with the former statement of the character of consciousness? If Mill had shown, or sought to show, that the percipient act exists, or is possible, as a matter of consciousness, apart from its object, and that in the percipient act there is thus necessarily a double act of knowledge, he would have attempted something relevant. What he does is quite different. Hamilton is to be held as meaning, by the recognition on the part of the thinking subject of its own acts or affections, also of "all that is therein implied, or, as he would say, contained." Hamilton is to be held as doing no such thing, in several senses of these words, or in any sense of the word relevant to the present point. Neither Hamilton nor any one else with a correct conception of consciousness, would hold that it has for its object every implicate of every act of knowledge or state of mind. Consciousness is of the present, and the present only,—of what is now, or now and here. And he offers a perfectly distinct explanation of the relation of any existing cognitive act of consciousness to what lies beyond the sphere of the now or here. But putting this utterly foreign meaning on Hamilton's words, Mill asks—

> "How can he refuse the name of consciousness to our mediate knowledge,—to our knowledge or belief (for instance) of the past? The past reality is certainly implied in the present recollection of which we are conscious; and our author has said that all our mediate knowledge is contained in our immediate, as he has elsewhere said that knowledge of the outward object is contained in our knowledge of the perception."[1]

"The past reality is certainly implied in the present recollection of which we are conscious." In what sense implied? It is not a present object of consciousness; it is a *past* object or reality. This past object is in consciousness as *an image*, — it is now an imaged, or represented object. As a represented object it is known, and this is the only possible sense in which it can be known; and as such the knowledge is immediate, —immediate or intuitive of the image. Our mediate knowledge is thus "contained" in our immediate, but not "implied" in it, as Mill would pervert the sense. Nor has Hamilton ever said "that all our mediate knowledge is contained in our immediate, just as knowledge of

[1] *Exam.*, chap. viii. p. 144.

the outward object is contained in our knowledge of the perception." He has often said the very reverse,—that while the object known in perception cannot be separated from the percipient act, the past object in memory—*i.e.*, the original or presented object—does not necessarily now exist, because we are conscious of its image, or that it was presented to us at a past time; whereas the object in perception being now apprehended, now necessarily exists. This confusion of "the past reality" as object of presentation and of representation, runs through the whole of Mill's criticism of Hamilton's doctrine of presentative and representative knowledge. He never once gets within sight of Hamilton's meaning, and thus misconceives the essential point of his whole doctrine of Cognition and of Realism.[1] Mill actually goes the length of assuming that the representation of that which has never been perceived at all, as in the theory of Representative Perception, is exactly parallel with the representation in Memory of that which was presented or perceived at a past time, and that there is no more difficulty of representation in the one case than in the other!

Mill carries out his misconception in reference to the distinction of Knowledge and Belief.

"If it be true that 'an act of knowledge' exists, and is what it is 'only by relation to its object,' this must be equally true of an act of Belief; and it must be as manifest of the one act as of the other, 'that it can be known only through the object to which it is correlative.' Therefore, past events, distant objects, . . . inasmuch as they are believed, are as much objects of immediate knowledge as things finite and present,—since they are presupposed and

[1] See below further on this point, chap. vi

implicitly contained in the mental fact of belief, exactly as a present object is implicitly contained in the mental fact of perception."[1]

Belief no doubt implies an object believed in; belief as an act of consciousness implies a consciousness of the object believed in; but the object believed in is not necessarily always an object of the same sort. It may be an object which I perceive now and here—in this time and this space. I may believe in the reality of that, because I am conscious of it. Or the object believed in may be an *imaged* object corresponding to that which was once presented to me,—now no longer possibly in existence; and this imaged object, with the judgment that it has arisen from a presentation in the past, is the object of which I am conscious,—nay, cognisant only,—and of all that I am immediately cognisant. I believe that the image in my mind represents what once was; but the past event itself is not as much an object of immediate knowledge as is this present, or even an object of immediate knowledge at all. The same is true of the belief in the distant (or absent) object,—distant in space. This is no more apprehended immediately, because the image of it is apprehended, than the past event is apprehended intuitively because of the image of it in the consciousness.

Besides the features of (1) knowledge, (2) knowledge by me, and (3) immediate knowledge implied in consciousness, Hamilton specifies other "conditions" or "limitations." These are most fully given in Note H to *Reid's Works.*[2]

[1] *Exam.*, chap. viii. p. 151.

[2] P. 929. For an earlier sketch see *Metaphysics*, L. XI., XII.

(4) Consciousness is an *actual*, not a *potential* knowledge. There may be knowledge in the mind in a state of potentiality, as, for example,—

"a man is said to know—that is, is able to know—that 7 + 9 = 16, though that equation be not, at the moment, the object of his thought; but we cannot say that he is conscious of this truth unless while actually present to his mind."[1]

(5) It is an *apprehension*. To know, we must know something; and immediately and actually to know anything is to know it as now and here existing—that is, to apprehend it.

(6) It is a *discrimination*, and supposes therefore plurality and difference. For we cannot apprehend a thing unless we distinguish the apprehending subject from the apprehended object.

a. There is the contrast between the opposites,—self and not-self, Ego and non-Ego, mind and matter.

b. There is the discrimination of the modifications,—acts and states of the internal subject or self from each other. We are conscious of one mental state only as we distinguish it from another.

c. There is the discrimination of the facts and qualities of the external world. We are conscious of an external quality or body only as we distinguish it from others.[2]

(7) It is a *judgment*. We cannot apprehend a thing without, *pro tanto*, affirming it to exist. This condition is virtually contained in the preceding. It is a judgment affirmative of subjective or ideal existence in which all consciousness is realised.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XI. [2] *Ibid.*, L. XXXIV.

(8) The eighth condition is, Whatever is thought is thought under the attribute of *existence*, — existence being a notion *a priori*, and the primary act of consciousness an existential judgment. If we are only conscious as we apprehend an object, and only apprehend it as we affirm it to exist, existence must be attributed to the object by the mind; and this could not be done unless existence as a notion virtually pre-existed in the mind.[1]

Hamilton insists strongly on the fact that judgment is the simplest or most elementary act of knowledge. But he recognises two kinds or rather degrees of judgment,—what we might venture to name the *psychological* (or better *metaphysical*) judgment, and the *logical*. The first or simplest form of judgment is "the primary affirmation of existence, — the existential judgment." "The notion of existence is native to the mind. The first act of experience awoke it, and the first act of consciousness was a subsumption of that of which we were conscious under this notion; in other words, the first act of consciousness was an affirmation of the existence of something. The first and simplest act of comparison is thus the discrimination of existence from non-existence; and the first or simplest judgment is the affirmation of existence,—in other words, the denial of non-existence."[2]

The existence affirmed in the primary judgment is either ideal, as of a mode of consciousness, or real, as of a quality of a non-Ego.

The other form of judgment, which may be called the logical, is "a judgment of something more than a mere affirmation of the existence of a phænomenon,—some-

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 934. [2] *Metaphysics*, L. XXXIV.

thing more than a mere discrimination of one phæno-menon from another." This is "the more varied and elaborate comparison of one notion with another, and the enouncement of their agreement and disagreement."[1] This comparison of notion and notion, or of individual and notion,—of subject and predicate,—is obviously only possible through the primary judgment, for subject and predicate as separate notions must be conceived, and in the conception affirmed ideally to be, ere we can join or disjoin them in the secondary or logical judgment. This is an important and fundamental point in every philosophy of knowledge and being.

(9) The ninth limitation of consciousness is, that while only realised in the recognition of existence, it is only realised in the recognition of the existent *as conditioned.*[2]

(10) The tenth limitation of consciousness is that of *Time.* This is the necessary condition of every conscious act; thought is only realised to us as in succession, and succession is only conceived by us under the concept of time. Existence and existence in time is thus an elementary form of our intelligence. But we do not conceive existence in time absolutely or infinitely—we conceive it only as conditioned in time; and existence conditioned in time expresses at once and in relation, the three categories of thought, which afford us in combination the principle of causality. Existence thus known as successive, is essential to what we call consciousness; and the latter accordingly involves Memory.[3]

The general doctrine of consciousness now given suggests several points for remark. I confess there

[1] *Metaphysics,* L. XXXVII. [2] See further below, chaps. ix., x., xi.
[3] Compare *Metaphysics,* L. XI.

seems to me some very considerable ambiguity in the doctrine of Hamilton regarding our knowledge of the Ego. The Ego, or Self, cannot be truly or properly said to be unknown or unknowable. It is true that we do not know a self *per se*, or an Ego, out of relation to a state or act of consciousness. I know myself to be, only as I know myself to be feeling, to be perceiving, to be willing, or in some definite act. I never apprehend myself apart from a conscious state; I never apprehend a conscious state apart from myself. This is true; and in that sense, as separate existences, self and phænomenon are alike unknowable, if not meaningless. But I do apprehend or know myself truly, really, when I apprehend or know any state of consciousness. "I am conscious of this or that thing" means that I know myself to be,—to be one,—to be one among many,—to be one and the same,—to be more than the existing or temporary state. And if I know all this, I know a great deal about myself,—as much, in fact, as I know about the act or state itself. And in so knowing myself, I know myself not by means of inference or suggestion from the previous or contemporaneous knowledge of the act or state; I know myself directly as in and along with the act or state. At least, in and along with this act or state, I know myself to be; and in and along with the various acts and states, I know myself to be one and the same. It is only with regard to my identity that succession of various states is needed; and it is only here, and in and through these, that there can be any ground for saying that I do not directly or immediately know myself to be the same. My oneness and identity are consciously implied, at least, in the very fact of my knowledge of a succession in consciousness. It would seem, indeed, that while self can be directly apprehended as in contrast to the act or state of consciousness, as soon as we can realise the fact and meaning of an act or state at all, it is only through the knowledge of successive states that we can know the identity of the self,—as against the manifold; while, at the same time, the knowledge of the manifold is possible only through the knowledge of the accompanying—even underlying—identity of self. The identity of self cannot thus be given in a single intuition; it can be realised only through its relation to successive intuitions, as these can be realised only through relation to this identity.

If, moreover, there be a primary belief in a conscious subject or Ego, if, further, its reality be inferred or supposed on the general principle of a necessity of thought, and if this subject be known as different from that of the material phænomena,—it cannot properly be said to be unknowable, or even unknown. The conscious subject, in so far as it is that which knows, feels, and wills, is very distinctly and definitely an object of knowledge to itself. What it is, or whether it is, independently of these relative manifestations, may be considered soluble questions or not; but thus at least, as the term of a relation, it is object of definite, even immediate knowledge.

On this point of the mediate or inferential knowledge of the Ego, Hamilton cannot, however, be said to be quite consistent. There are passages in which he seems to assert an immediate knowledge or consciousness of the Ego or Self as well as of the state and along with it.

He tells us that "the something of which we are conscious, and of which we predicate existence in the primary judgment, is twofold,—the Ego and the non-Ego. We are conscious of both, and affirm existence of both."[1] If we are conscious of the Ego, as we are of the non-Ego, it must be known immediately, not mediately. The immediate knowledge of the Ego, as well as of the non-Ego, seems indeed essential to his doctrine of Natural Dualism. These are regarded as the original and ultimate elements of our experience,—given or presented in mutual relation.

Hamilton's doctrine regarding the Identity of Self and its ground is not more satisfactory. In evolving fully the conditions of consciousness, he makes one of these succession in time, and hence Memory. He adds to this that Memory is necessary, (*a*) in order to the holding fast, comparison and distinction of the mental states; (*b*) their reference to self. Without it, each moment in the mental succession would be a separate existence

> "The notion of the Ego or Self arises from the recognised permanence and identity of the thinking subject in contrast to the recognised succession and variety of its modifications. This recognition is possible only through memory. The notion of self is, therefore, the result of memory. But the notion of self is involved in consciousness, so consequently is memory."[2]

This is, perhaps, stated in a way too unqualified. It is certainly not the whole of the truth in the matter. For, on the other hand, (*a*) consciousness as a direct act

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. IX. [2] *Ibid.*, L. XI.

of intuition is obviously necessary to memory. Memory of that which was never in consciousness is obviously impossible. Memory cannot thus ground consciousness; consciousness grounds memory.

(*b*) The notion of self and the notion of the permanence and identity of self are not quite the same; and while the identity of self is known through succession and variety, possible only on the supposition of memory, the notion of self cannot be said to be "the result of memory." Memory itself already supposes the notion of self and a permanent identical self capable of so knowing the succession and variety in contrast to itself.[1] It would be better to say that consciousness is realised in and through memory, and memory is realised in and through consciousness; and that both repose on and presuppose a self, one and identical in time,—a reality which, however, is revealed to us, or which we know ourselves to be, only in consciousness, and in full and clear, or reflective consciousness.

Consciousness, thus, being the common element or condition of all mental phænomena as such, certain important questions still arise. The most general of these is, What precisely is the relation of consciousness to each kind or class of the mental phænomena? Is it related to each in exactly the same way, or if differently, how?

On this point it cannot be said that Hamilton's doctrine is perfectly clear. He tells us, no doubt, that consciousness, this general condition of the existence of the modifications of mind, "or of their existence within the sphere of intelligence," is "not to be viewed as

[1] Compare *Reid's Works*, pp. 350-353.

anything different from these modifications themselves."[1] It may be taken, in fact, as their *summum genus*, or as that element which can be predicated of each kind universally.

"Consciousness is simple,—is not composed of parts, either similar or dissimilar. It always resembles itself, differing only in the degrees of its intensity: thus there are not various kinds of consciousness, although there are various kinds of mental modes or states, of which we are conscious."[2]

What, it may be asked, is it that constitutes the difference in kind of a mental state, if it be not a difference in consciousness? So far as the relation of consciousness to the acts of knowledge is concerned, we may take the doctrine as sufficiently clear and explicit. On this point he says: "Consciousness and knowledge are, in fact, the same thing considered in different relations, or from different points of view. Knowledge is consciousness viewed in relation to its object; consciousness is knowledge viewed in relation to its subject. The one signalises that *something is known* (by me); the other signalises that *I know* (something)."[3]

When we come to the question of the precise relation of consciousness to the facts of feeling, desire, and volition, there does seem considerable difficulty in its proper statement and adjustment. Consciousness being admittedly the *summum genus* of all the modifications of mind, each is a consciousness. But then each kind—feeling, desire, volition — differs from knowledge, and from each other. In answer to those who maintain the faculty of cognition to be the fundamental power of

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XI. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Reid's Works*, Note H, p. 933.

mind from which all others are derivative, he says that they did not observe that although pleasure and pain, desire and volition, are only as they are known to be, yet in these a quality of mind absolutely new has been superadded. This was not involved in, and, therefore, could not have been evolved out of, the new faculty of knowledge.[1] In what terms, then, are we to describe the specific difference? The common element is knowledge, and knowledge only. How am I to distinguish, thus, perception from feeling, or feeling from desire or volition? Wherein precisely lies the difference in the consciousness? Is it an element other or more than consciousness? Is this, then, a mental element? Or is there in the consciousness of feeling or volition a mental element which is not a conscious element? Either consciousness is more than mere recognition of each mental state as mine, or there is more than consciousness in each mental phænomenon. Consciousness seems indeed to be badly described when it is restricted to simple recognition or knowledge of mental modifications: as such it is not convertible with every mental modification experienced, and yet we cannot throw out of consciousness either the distinctive element of feeling, desire, or volition.

"Consciousness is the general condition of their existence [the modifications of mind], *or of their existence within the sphere of intelligence*."[2] It is to be regarded "as a general expression for the primary and fundamental condition of all the energies and affections of our mind, *inasmuch as these are known to exist*."[3]

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XI. [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Reid's Works*, p. 929.

These and similar statements would seem to imply that apart from a consciousness there is no mental phænomenon, that every mental phænomenon is a consciousness. But this is not consistent with what Hamilton elsewhere maintains. He very expressly teaches a doctrine of what is called Mental Latency. This implies that there are modifications of mind, activities and passivities, of which, while they exist, there is no consciousness, which never rise into consciousness at all, and which are yet influential on our actual or conscious experience. The first degree of latency is shown in the possession by the mind of what it does not actually at the present moment put into use,—as the knowledge of a language. The second degree is shown when knowledge and habits of action of which the mind is wholly unconscious in its ordinary state are revealed to consciousness in certain extraordinary exaltations of its powers,—as in febrile delirium, somnambulism, &c. The third and highest degree is found in our ordinary experience, when mental activities and passivities of which we are unconscious manifest their existence by effects of which we are conscious. He even maintains "that what we are conscious of is constructed out of what we are not conscious of,—that our whole knowledge is made up of the unknown and the incognisable." [1] His general line of proof of this position is, that certain parts of consciousness necessarily suppose those mental modifications to exist, and to exert an influence on the conscious processes. He appeals to the facts of Perception, Association, and the acquired Dexterities or Habits, in support of his views.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XVII. Cf. *Reid's Works*, p. 933

Of course, if there be truly mental acts and states below or beyond consciousness, consciousness is not indispensable to mental activity—is not an essential condition of a mental energy. It is only the condition of the *phænomena* of the mind, or those energies of mind which appear or are known to us,—to the Self or Ego, —"of their existence within the sphere of intelligence," or "inasmuch as these are known to exist." It cannot consistently be maintained that every mental modification is a conscious one, or appears in consciousness, and that there are modifications of mind of which there is no consciousness whatever. Consciousness would indeed on this view be the highest development of mental energy, but not the only one. It would include only the experience we have of the mental energies. This would be equivalent to saying that consciousness of the mental modifications is essential to those modifications which we know and experience in the shape of feeling, desire, and will.

There are serious difficulties on any aspect of this doctrine of latent mental energies. Are these, it may be asked, the same in character with the conscious ones —with conscious knowledge, feeling, and volition? If so, how can it be said that consciousness is essential to knowledge, feeling, volition? Are they different from the conscious modifications, and yet mental? Then they differ by opposites,—even contradictories,—for the conscious and the unconscious are so; and yet they are regarded as of the same genus,—mental. This whole doctrine of latency, and its consistency with one main position in his philosophy, are obviously points which Hamilton has not thoroughly sifted. And the truth is, that his proof is by no means cogent.

This third degree of latency may be fairly questioned. It is not clear that there is any necessity to suppose that each half of the *minimum visibile*, for example, makes any impression on the mind. The conscious act of perception may arise as a new phænomenon only after a certain amount of surface has reflected the rays of light. For it is not shown that the reflection of the light or the amount of illuminated surface is more than a mere concause, which operates only in conjunction with coexisting mental power. If it is merely the occasion of a perceptive energy,—an apprehensive act,—there is no need for supposing its halves or elements to have had any effect, before their synthesis, and then only in the moment of their cognition by the conscious mind.

Further, the peculiarity of Hamilton's third degree of latency is that what is latent—the unconscious mental modification—never is in consciousness at all before it exists in latency. In Memory or Delirium, on the other hand, there was first a conscious state; and this, through decay or decrease, falls, as it were, below consciousness into latency. There is thus a peculiar difficulty for the third grade of latency in attempting to show that the conscious arises out of the unconscious. This cannot be regarded as a mere case of physical transmutation of force; for the two states are not supposed to be equally physical, or of the same kind at all. There is, in fact, no natural community or known continuity of development between the unconscious—now called mental—and the conscious state or act. The union thus of the two halves of the *minimum sensibile* cannot be regarded as affording as product this new, unique, and singular phænomenon, the consciousness of the object. There is a break here of physical continuity;—and the physical analogy is inapplicable. There is far more in the conscious act of the perception of a surface than the mere surface, or the union of the two portions of the rays of light. All the space and time conditions, and certain of the categories of thought, are involved,—especially discrimination or judgment. The phænomenon of conscious perception is thus not only unique, it contains more than its supposed antecedent or cause. The simple explanation of the fact seems to lie in this: (1) That certain physical or physiological conditions, or impressions, are needed in the Sense; and (2) that these must be completed or fulfilled ere the conscious act arises. The amount of the reflection of the rays of light and the conscious perception may stand to each other in the relation of antecedent and consequent, and yet there may be no community or continuity of development between the unconscious and the conscious. Impressions on the organs and nerves may be needed, to a definite extent; but it does not follow that the conscious sensation or perception is the product or up-gathering of these impressions, which are wholly unknown to consciousness. Nothing is gained, moreover, by introducing the notion of unconscious mental modification as an intermediary. For of this we can form no precise conception. Obviously mental latencies may in some sense be allowed in regard to acts and states once in consciousness. These do not pass beyond the sphere of mind,—at least beyond the power of recall. But mental modifications not originally conscious seem to imply great difficulty, and explain nothing.

To apply the term knowledge, as Hamilton does, to a state or mode of consciousness in latency is of very doubtful propriety. As latent,—as below consciousness,—it is not knowledge: it is admittedly only knowledge as it is realised in a present or actual mode of consciousness. But then it is no longer potential or a potency; it is an actual conscious state. To call it knowledge, when in latency or potentiality, is certainly to contradict the statement that consciousness is all knowledge, or that all knowledge is consciousness. And if it be only knowledge when it has ceased to be latent and risen to consciousness, then it was not properly knowledge before. In truth, the phrase *potential knowledge* can only properly be construed as referring to certain conditions of knowledge,—partly physiological, partly psychological,—antecedent to or accompanying the actual consciousness. But it would be well not to call these knowledge,—even potential knowledge.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSCIOUSNESS—ITS AUTHORITY AND VERACITY—THE ARGUMENT FROM COMMON SENSE.

THE Philosophy of Common Sense, as held and explained by Hamilton, is none other than the attempt to analyse knowledge or consciousness,—our experience, in fact, into its elements. He has explicitly and with reiteration shown that by "Common Sense" he does not mean the transfer to philosophy of "a sound understanding applied to vulgar objects, in contrast to a scientific or speculative intelligence," as an instrument of research.

"It is in this sense," he says, "that it has been taken by those who have derided the principle on which the philosophy which has been distinctly denominated the Scottish, professes to be established." [1]

He has further explicitly shown that the Argument from Common Sense or the method of the Philosophy of Common Sense, though

"an appeal to the natural convictions of mankind, is not an appeal from philosophy to blind feeling. It is only an appeal from the theoretical conclusions of particular philosophers to the catholic principles of all philosophy." [2]

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[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XXXVIII.

[2] *Reid's Works*, p. 751.

As it has been well put:—

"It carries the appeal into a sphere where the philosophic and the vulgar have ceased to be distinguished; it shows that not the mind of the philosopher, and not the mind of the vulgar, but the mind of man is what philosophy has to deal with, and that its office is to resolve current beliefs into their elements, not satisfied until it has reached the final and absolutely pure deliverance of consciousness."[1]

Hamilton tells us:—

"The first problem of philosophy is to seek out, purify, and establish, by intellectual analysis and criticism, the elementary feelings and beliefs in which are given the elementary truths of which all are in possession." "This is dependent on philosophy as an art. Common Sense is like Common Law. Each may be laid down as the general rule of decision; but in the one case it must be left to the jurist, in the other to the philosopher, to ascertain what are the contents of the rule."[2]

Nothing can well be more explicit than these statements. And we should long ago have ceased to hear the paltry criticism of the Philosophy of Common Sense to which Hamilton here refers. His own practice alone should have sufficed to give people a better light. This philosophy differs as to method in nothing from any other possible philosophy which is consistent with itself. Every system must accept and start from experience,— individual or universal, or both. A beginning alleged in a point above or beyond our actual experience is an absurdity. This is a method which professes to construct itself and its datum. Such a method is not pos-

[1] *Encyclop. Brit.*, *Sir W. Hamilton*, by Miss Hamilton.
[2] *Reid's Works*, pp. 751, 752.

sible; and if it were, it would never yield a philosophy of experience, or be anything but abstract and fantastic verbalism. The value of the philosophy of Common Sense, in this respect, is, that it indicates the ultimate and universal elements in experience, and attempts also their co-ordination, and, so far, their systematising. And one thing it does legitimately; it challenges a so-called speculative or rationalising philosophy to show how what is alleged to be illusory or unreal in our actual experience has grown up to be as it is; and this is a task which that style of speculation is much more inclined to pass by than to attempt. The usual shift is, while employing the term experience, and words indicating its contents as facts, to sublimate these into merely verbal relations.

The principles of Common Sense which Hamilton professes to find, and which he seeks by a strictly philosophical method, are thus simply the necessary and universal principles of human knowedge,—reached, as they can only be reached, through analytical reflection on experience itself. If there be such principles at all, they must be reflected in common belief and action, in history, in language, in morals, and in social institutions. What degree of importance is to be given to the practical embodiment and application of those principles is a very pertinent question for philosophy. But Hamilton does not put this recognition and exemplification as the ultimate basis of philosophy; he fairly grants it to be matter of analysis, along with the consciousness of the individual thinker, and in the light of that consciousness. He offers criteria for determining the existence, the nature, the number of those principles; and those who attack his position must understand this. Otherwise their efforts are but a beating of the air. In a very marked way, indeed, did Hamilton recognise the practical embodiment of the universal principles of knowledge. He regarded it as a datum to be dealt with, and the principles realised as worthy of respect and careful scrutiny. It was not to him a proof that a principle is illusory or false because it happens to be commonly embodied in history and civil institutions, or proceeded upon in human action. This he left for Spinoza, and those who profess to construct what they call reality; to show how greatly superior this ideal scheme is to anything realised, and, indeed, that whatever, in actual experience, does not conform to its requirements, is truly unreal or non-existent. No one in these times has struck with firmer hand than Hamilton at a theory which confounds and perverts the fundamental distinctions of experience, and resolves reality into a spinning whirl of contradictions, or into figures of such indefiniteness as, like the spectre crowd—

> "seem to rise and die,
> Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
> While nought confirmed can ear or eye
> Discern of sound or mien."

The criteria,—the essential notes or characters,—by which we are enabled to distinguish our original from our derivative cognitions, are, as finally stated by Hamilton, four:—

1. Their Incomprehensibility. When we are able to comprehend how or why a thing is, the belief of the existence of that thing is not a primary datum of con-

sciousness, but a subsumption under the cognition or belief which affords its reason.

2. Their Simplicity. If a cognition or belief be made up of, and can be explicated into, a plurality of cognitions or beliefs, it is manifest that, as compound, it cannot be original.

3. Their Necessity and Absolute Universality. These may be regarded as coincident,—for when a belief is necessary, it is, *eo ipso*, universal; and that a belief is universal, is a certain index that it must be necessary. To prove the necessity, the universality must, however, be absolute; for a relative universality indicates no more than custom and education, although the subjects themselves may deem that they follow the dictates of nature.

4. Their Comparative Evidence and Certainty. This alone, with the third, is well stated by Aristotle, "What *appears to all*, that we affirm *to be*; and he who rejects this belief will assuredly advance nothing better deserving of credence."[1]

Hamilton, in laying down and applying those canons of analysis, expressly seeks to set aside, as neither primary nor ultimate, what can be shown to be due to mere generalisation. The two first tests,—Incomprehensibility and Simplicity,—provide for this. He even says: "An element of thought being found necessary, there remains a further process to ascertain whether it be (1) by nature or education; (2) ultimately or derivatively necessary; (3) positive or negative."[2]

[1] *Reid's Works*, pp. 754, 755. Cf. *Metaphysics*, L. XV.

[2] *Reid's Works*, p. 18; *Metaphysics*, L. XXXVIII. See below, chaps. ix. x. xi.

Hamilton virtually says, in regard to the proposed generalisation of the whole of knowledge from experience,—This cannot be done, for the reason that there is presupposed at every step of the generalising process,—from the beginning and all through,—a fact or facts of consciousness not given in the generalisation. I cannot even conceive the particulars to be generalised, or the law of the process, without bringing to them what is beyond them, or truly ultimate in knowledge,—what, in fact, "lies at the root of all experience." And in regard to any special generalisation of a law, Hamilton would say,—You are not entitled to call that an acquisition from experience or a generalisation, if it can be shown that the very act or process of generalising is carried on under the presupposition of that which you profess to evolve in the end. This, he would say, is the case in regard to the eduction of space out of time, of the Ego out of sensation, and other points. Our present consciousness is to Hamilton simply what it is to any inquirer,—the matter of analysis. He is not, as has been ignorantly done, to be regarded as unfaithful to his method

"when he succeeds in tracing a belief or notion, of which we cannot now divest ourselves, into a generalisation from experience, and as ignorant of the only possible scientific method whenever he asserts of another that it cannot have been acquired by experience, because that experience presupposes it." [1]

This, in fact, in both its sides, is his method.

It may be asked, On what are those criteria grounded?

[1] *Battle of the Philosophies*, p. 55. One of the best discussions of the points between Mill and Hamilton.

Have they a basis in consciousness itself, or in something higher? To this Hamilton would virtually reply, —Let the fact of knowledge or consciousness at all be accepted,—and that we know is implied in our very being—in our putting conscious questions—in perceiving and thinking,—then these criteria being realised by us in the course of reflection on knowledge or consciousness, we become aware of them as the tests of the ultimate in knowledge before which we recoil, or the limits beyond which we cannot go. They are merely general statements of what we meet with in reflecting on our conscious experience, when we seek to push back this experience to its ultimate possibility for us. They are not criteria superinduced upon that experience from any higher or other source than itself. They are the features of the definite principles at the root of knowledge. Each individual must go through a process of reflection for himself, in order to realise them and their meaning; but in so doing, he rises above his mere individual experience, and puts himself in the sphere of universal knowledge for man. He unites himself with mind in humanity. There is no mere individualism in such a system; there is rather the lifting up of the individual from his narrow sphere to the realm of the universal and the etern

The transition to the question of the Authority of those principles of knowledge thus found, and its solution, is comparatively easy. It is asked, What is the authority of those primary elements of knowledge as warrants and criteria of truth? How do those primary propositions certify us of their own veracity? To this Hamilton replies :—

"The only possible answer is, that as elements of our mental constitution,—*as* the essential conditions of our knowledge,—they *must* by us be accepted as true." [1]

Hamilton has no proof — attempts no proof of the authority of those principles. As Reid says:—

"Every kind of reasoning for the veracity of our faculties amounts to no more than taking their own testimony for their veracity. There is an absurdity in attempting to prove by any kind of reasoning, probable or demonstrative, that our reason is not fallacious, since the very point in question is whether reasoning may be trusted." [2]

Hamilton virtually accepts this position. He points to our natural or spontaneous faith in them as a simple fact in knowledge; and all that he does is to show that when we question this faith, or seek for a ground of it, we can but state the necessities or limitations under which we find ourselves conscious of thinking, and through which we are in the end compelled to rest in it. Descartes might fairly be translated as meaning the same thing. We fall back with him on the veracity of God, as the author of our faculties. This is not properly a proof, it is a statement of our natural faith in the spontaneous outgoings of our powers,—our perception and our reason. And Hamilton, when he speaks of a gratuitous doubt, merely implies that the supposition—the gratuitous supposition—of our intelligence being delusive, is to be confronted with the natural presumption of its truthfulness, which we feel and accept, and is not to be adopted unless there be a proof that we have been created the victims of delu-

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 743.
[2] *Intell. Powers*, vi. p. 447. Cf. Hamilton, *Reid's Works*, p. 761.

sion. But this it is for the gratuitous doubter, or the dogmatist who denies, consistently to adduce.

Nowhere has Hamilton stated the character of the argument from Common Sense more succinctly and clearly than in these words :—

> "To argue from Common Sense is nothing more than to render available the presumption in favour of the original facts of consciousness—*that what is by nature necessarily* BELIEVED *to be, truly* IS. Aristotle, in whose philosophy this presumption obtained the authority of a principle, thus enounces the argument : 'What *appears to all*, that we affirm to be ; and he who rejects this *belief* will assuredly advance nothing better worthy of credit.'—(Eth. Nic., x. 2.) As this argument rests entirely on a presumption, the fundamental condition of its validity is that this presumption be not disproved. The presumption in favour of the veracity of consciousness is redargued by the repugnance of the facts themselves, of which consciousness is the complement ; as the truth of all can only be vindicated on the truth of each. The argument from common sense, therefore, postulates and founds on the assumption—that our original beliefs be not proved self-contradictory.
>
> "The harmony of our primary convictions being supposed and not redargued, the argument from common sense is decisive against every deductive inference not in unison with them. For as every conclusion is involved in its premises, and as these again must ultimately be resolved into some original belief, the conclusion, if inconsistent with the primary phænomena of consciousness, must, *ex hypothesi*, be inconsistent with its premises—that is, be logically false. On this ground our convictions at first hand peremptorily derogate from our convictions at second." [1]

These primary principles being ascertained, and affirming themselves as necessary beliefs or principles, we

[1] *Discussions*, p. 90.

presume them true, until they are proved to be false by their mutual contradiction, direct or indirect. We assume, thus, and apply a certain test of truth and falsehood,—the principle of non-contradiction. This, again, is itself a deliverance of common sense or a primary principle of consciousness. But it asserts itself as of a higher grade than certain other primary principles; for contradictory incompatibility is the annihilation of the act of consciousness or thought. This principle, therefore, the sceptic must admit; for he too, in challenging the truth of these primary data, thinks, or exercises a definite act of consciousness, and thus assumes the principle of non-contradiction. Now, what Hamilton challenged the sceptic to do, was to prove these primary principles false. He admitted that if they be proved contradictory, they are discredited. But he might have added, the sceptic cannot do this without assuming not only the negative test of non-contradiction, but the positive laws of inference,—all of which are simply themselves forms of ultimate principles. In fact, the essential laws of our intelligence cannot be proved to be deceitful, without assuming the truth of the essential laws of our intelligence.

There are two kinds of ultimate truths,—the strictly Necessary and the Contingent.

"Necessity, he tells us, is of two kinds. There is one necessity, when we cannot construe it to our minds as possible that the deliverance of consciousness should not be true. This logical impossibility occurs in the case of what are called Necessary Truths—truths of reason and intelligence; as in the law of Causality, the law of Substance, and still more in the laws of Identity, Contradiction, and Excluded

Middle. There is another necessity, when it is not unthinkable that the deliverance of consciousness may possibly be false, but at the same time when we cannot but admit that this deliverance is of such and such a purport. This is seen in the case of what are called Contingent Truths or truths of fact. Thus, for example, I can theoretically suppose that the external object I am conscious of in perception may be, in reality, nothing but a mode of mind or self. I am unable, however, to think that it does not appear to me—that consciousness does not compel me to regard it,—*as* external—*as* a mode of matter or not-self. And such being the case, I cannot practically believe the supposition I am able speculatively to maintain, for I cannot believe this supposition without believing that the last ground of all belief is not to be believed; which is self-contradictory. . . . The argument from common sense, it may be observed, is of principal importance in reference to that class of contingent truths. The others, from their converse being absolutely incogitable, sufficiently guard themselves."[1]

We thus are able to see in what sense Hamilton alleges that the facts of consciousness, simply as facts, are above doubt. This is true to the extent that being conscious we cannot, without *subreptio principii*, doubt our being conscious. But in regard to an alleged specific deliverance of consciousness,—as that an extended thing there is,—this, as a specific fact of consciousness, must be admitted ere we can say that to doubt its being a fact of consciousness involves a contradiction. So that the principle of contradiction is directly of little or no avail here. This is a point which Hamilton has not accurately distinguished. The main question is as to the fact whether consciousness testifies in a given way or not. Of course this may be so, and we may be under

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 756.

a necessity of admitting that it is so, but this is not a necessity primarily guaranteed by the principle of non-contradiction. Hamilton, however, would maintain that, as the fact is testified to by consciousness,—is an ultimate deliverance of consciousness,—to suppose the testimony false is to say that consciousness can truly contradict itself—that is, can be a true ground of belief now, and a false ground then. There is thus a mediate contradiction,—a contradiction in holding, on the ground of consciousness, the fact of the testimony, and holding, on the same ground, the falsehood of the testimony.

It thus may be fairly argued that the Idealist who admits the fact of the testimony to non-mental reality in perception, and who at the same time denies its truth, —says the object perceived is after all but a form of consciousness, — is mediately contradictory or inconsistent. He virtually says consciousness as perception is an illusion, and this he does either gratuitously or on some alleged ground. The gratuitous denial may be thrown out of account. But the denial which proceeds on a ground or reason must found this either on an original or on an acquired principle in consciousness. If the former, consciousness is assumed to be true in order to prove itself false. If the latter, we have the absurdity of an acquired principle or ground in consciousness brought forward as of superior authority to an admitted primary deliverance. This principle, moreover, cannot be established or accepted, unless as itself grounded on something primary in consciousness; and we thus have a ground alleged as sound or true, which yet is traced back to a class of primary deliverances, which it is adduced to discredit. The only mode of escape from absurdity and mediate contradiction on the part of the idealist, is to deny that consciousness as perception does testify to the reality of non-mental or non-conscious objects. The idealist, in denying the truth of the primary deliverance, must assume some principle at the least of coequal rank with the deliverance he denies, and thus mediately contradict, — annihilate his own method of criticism.

On this head there seem to me to be but three satisfactory positions :—

1°, Consciousness as a given datum, or experience, as realised in consciousness, is to be analysed and sifted as far back as it possibly can,—analysed until it guarantees itself, and guarantees itself as realised in certain ultimate forms or principles.

2°, These being thus revealed as the necessary grounds and conditions of knowledge, are to be accepted by us under pain of abrogating knowledge altogether, and thus paralysing even doubt and negation.

3°, The veracity of those deliverances, in as far as they testify to what is beyond themselves, cannot be proved—*i.e.*, established by reasoning. Neither can it be disproved—*i.e.*, by reasoning. The judge of consciousness can only be consciousness itself. Consciousness is thus assumed, in judging, to be trustworthy. The veracity of consciousness cannot be disproved, for consciousness alone could show this unveracity; but in so doing it would necessarily subvert its own conclusion as itself a deliverance of consciousness.

We cannot, however, give the benefit of this argument to such a position as that of Ferrier.[1] He holds

[1] *Institutes, Introd.* § 39 *et seq.*

that even the ascertained and sifted primary data of consciousness are natural inadvertences, and at the same time that man is to be taught to think correctly, and that philosophy is to be reasoned out from the beginning. This is really to admit the fact of the testimony of the primary data of consciousness to certain things, and yet to dispute their truthfulness. Now the trustworthiness of these primary deliverances cannot be assailed without assuming the trustworthiness of them, or of some of them at the same time. A subordinate principle, or an acquired principle, dependent as it must be on some one or more of them, is obviously a futile basis of assault. And if they are all natural inadvertences, both realism and idealism, dogmatism and scepticism, will be found about equally worthy or worthless. Besides, one would like very much to know, if philosophy is in such circumstances to be reasoned out from the beginning, where and when is the beginning? By no method of reasoning known to us can we create a beginning out of nothing. Our very reasoning itself would be a postulated beginning. What, then, is this beginning from which we are to start?—how, further, and by what rules, is it to be reasoned out? If it is a primary datum of consciousness, it is a natural inadvertence, and reasoning based on that will not help man to think more correctly. If it is not, then what is it? If a subordinate principle, it is either derived from these data, or it is of inferior authority. It is inferior even to a natural inadvertence. One would like, further, to know something of the nature and authority of the rules of the reasoning thus advanced to correct our natural inadvertences. It can hardly be supposed capable of dispensing with the law of necessary implication or self-consistency. And this, it will be found, is but a concrete application of a very primary datum of consciousness,—the law of non-contradiction. Yet as such it ought to be a natural inadvertence!

As ultimate, and therefore incomprehensible, in the proper sense of not being explicable by principles other than or beyond themselves, our primary principles are by Hamilton said to be given us in the form rather of *beliefs* than *cognitions.* This would seem so self-evident as to be indubitable, at least to any one who would avoid the absurdity of asserting knowledge, and yet holding an infinite regress of grounds of knowledge,—asserting a knowledge which never begins. Hamilton clearly explains the doctrine in the following words:—

> "'We know what rests on reason, but believe what rests on authority.' But reason itself must at last rest on authority, for the original data of reason do not rest on reason, but are necessarily accepted by reason on the authority of what is beyond itself. These data are therefore, in rigid propriety, Beliefs or Trusts. Thus it is that in the last resort we must perforce philosophically admit that belief is the primary condition of reason, and not reason the ultimate ground of belief."[1] "The ultimate facts of consciousness are given less in the form of cognitions than of beliefs. Consciousness in its last analysis—in other words, our primary experience—is a faith. We do not in propriety *know* that what we are compelled to receive as not self is not a perception of self; we can only on reflection *believe* such to be the case, in reliance on the original necessity of so believing, imposed on us by our nature."[2]

On this, Mill tells us that Hamilton recognised, besides

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 760. [2] *Discussions*, p. 86.

knowledge, a second source of intellectual conviction, which he calls *belief*, and further, that in Hamilton's opinion

"belief is a higher source of evidence than knowledge; belief is ultimate, knowledge only derivative; knowledge itself rests finally on belief; natural beliefs are the sole warrant for all our knowledge. Knowledge, therefore, is an inferior ground of assurance to natural belief." [1]

For the first statement there is no ground whatever. Knowledge as belief—that is, ultimate knowledge—with Hamilton means simply and obviously that form of knowledge which cannot be explained by or derived from aught beyond itself, but announces itself in the necessity of thinking it. He expressly says that our primary cognitions are not due to "a certain peculiar sense distinct from Intelligence." [2]

On the latter statement I must quote the pointed criticism of an acute writer:—

"Sir W. Hamilton says nothing of the kind. Take these three propositions: a=b; b=c; therefore, a=c. Suppose the truth of the first two rests on intuition, in which case we cannot prove, but do believe them to be true. The truth of the last proposition rests wholly on the truth of those two first. Does it therefore rest on an inferior ground of assurance? Not the least. Our certainty of its truth cannot exceed, but neither can it by any possibility be less than our certainty of the two first. The inference sought to be drawn [by Mr Mill] is palpably false." [3]

Thought, call it reason or reasoning, must ultimately be grounded on some first principle or principles, given

[1] *Exam.* chap. v. p. 76. [2] *Reid's Works*, p. 756.
[3] *Battle of the Two Philosophies*, pp. 28, 29.

in experience. Thought may awake to consciousness of itself in the consciousness of this principle, but thought does not in any sense create the principle; for this would be to assume that thought is already there to create what really is itself. But for a principle given in experience, and ultimately to us inexplicable, our reason would be utterly impotent,—something like the well-known Mahomet's coffin, hanging between heaven and earth, and having no place in either.

In this inquiry into human knowledge, we may possibly find that our ultimate test of truth or true knowledge is something in the shape of a barrier or limit to thought, such as we cannot overpass. In this case truth in its last analysis would be a simple necessity of thought, which guarantees its own certainty. And this will be found to be the case. We cannot have a test of ultimate truth separate from the truth itself. It must be its own guarantee,—its own self-proclaimed certitude. And this certitude will be found to regulate in a way the whole body of human knowledge. This will afford criteria which we shall be able to apply to subordinate propositions,—to the matter and form of our ordinary and scientific thought.

CHAPTER V.

CONSCIOUSNESS—ITS PHÆNOMENA—THE POWERS OF KNOWLEDGE—EXTERNAL PERCEPTION.

WHAT then, according to Hamilton, are the phænomena or contents of consciousness? This is the question of Phænomenal Psychology.

The whole phænomena of consciousness may be grouped into three great classes—viz., Knowledge or Cognition, Feeling, Desire and Will (Conation). These phænomena indicate fundamental faculties and capacities of mind. We are not, however, to suppose that these are entities really distinct from the conscious subject, and really different from each other. It is the same simple subject which exerts every energy of any faculty, and which is affected by every mode of any capacity of mind.

The mind can exert different actions, and be affected by different passions. These actions and passions are like, and they are unlike. We thus group them together in thought, and give them a common name. And these groups are really few and simple. Again, every action is an effect; every action and passion a modification. Every effect supposes a cause;

every modification a subject. When we say thus that the mind exerts an energy, we virtually say the mind is the cause of this energy. When we say that the mind acts or suffers, we virtually say that the mind is the subject of a modification. The mind is thus the common cause and subject of those various acts and states which fall into a few simple groups. Hence we properly say that the mind is the faculty of exerting such and such a class of energies, or it has the capacity of being modified by such and such an order of affections. *Faculty* thus means the causality of the mind in originating certain energies or acts; *capacity* means the susceptibility the mind has of being affected by a particular class of feelings.[1]

This threefold division of the mental phænomena might, as seems to me, be rendered more precise and accurate by sundering Desire and Will. Desire is much more nearly allied to Feeling than to Will. In its origin, Desire points either to agreeable feeling, or to the pain which arises from the consciousness of a want, in the absence of an object represented as suitable to our nature in some form or aspect. In its result, Desire is a tendency pointing to one definite issue,—the realisation of the object or aim represented. It is thus in both aspects distinguished from Will. Will in its highest and proper form passes into act through the contemplation of alternatives: there is free choice or determination. In its issue, it is not restricted to a single result, but has always the possibility of one or other alternative of choice. Desire and Will agree in being characterised by the element of *nisus* or effort; but the one is a

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XX.

fatal determination, the other is a free power. The most accurate division, accordingly, is, I think, into the fourfold form of Knowledge, Feeling, Desire, Will.

Hamilton's analysis and classification of the phænomena of knowledge is simple and exhaustive.

(1.) As we are endowed with a faculty of Cognition or Consciousness in general, and as we have not always possessed the knowledge which we now possess, we must have a faculty of acquiring knowledge. This acquisition can only be accomplished by the immediate presentation of a new object to consciousness. Hence it is shown that we have a faculty which may be called the *Acquisitive*, *Presentative*, or *Receptive*.

New knowledge is either of things external or internal,—the phænomena of the Ego or of the non-Ego. In the one case we have the faculty of External Perception; in the other that of Internal Perception, or self-consciousness. The acquisitive faculty is the faculty of experience,—external and internal. Reflection in its original and proper sense is self-consciousness concentrated.

(2.) As capable of knowledge, we must be able to retain or conserve it when acquired. This is the power of mental Retention simply,—the Conservative or Retentive Faculty. This is memory strictly so called, or the power of retaining knowledge in the mind, but out of consciousness. This implies our capability of losing from consciousness the object presented: otherwise there would be no room for a new object.

(3.) It is not enough to possess the power of Retention, we must further be able to recall what is retained out of unconsciousness into consciousness. This is the

Reproductive Faculty. It is governed by the laws of Mental Association. If these laws are allowed to operate without the intervention of the will, this faculty is Suggestion, or Spontaneous Suggestion; if under the influence of the will, it is Reminiscence or Recollection.

(4.) There is further required for the consummation of Memory and Reproduction, a faculty of representing in consciousness and of keeping before the mind the knowledge presented. This is the Representative Faculty, called Imagination or Phantasy. The Imagination of common language—the Productive Imagination of philosophers—is nothing but the Representative process *plus* the Comparative.

Imagination and Reproduction are not to be confounded: the two powers have no necessary proportion to each other. The power of representing may be, often is, much stronger than the power of recall.

(5.) But all these faculties are only subsidiary. They acquire, preserve, and hold up the materials for the use of a higher faculty which operates upon them. This is the Elaborative or Discursive faculty. This faculty has only one operation; it compares,—it is comparison—the faculty of relations. Analysis and synthesis are the conditions of comparison; and the results of comparison as exercised under its conditions are Conception or Generalisation, Judgment, and Reasoning. The faculty is also called Thought Proper, Διάνοια, Discursus, Verstand.

(6.) But the knowledge we have is not all due to experience. What we know by experience is contingent; but there are cognitions in the mind which are necessary,—which we cannot but think,—which thought supposes as its fundamental condition. These are not generalisations from experience; they are native to the mind. These are the laws which afford the conditions of the capacity of knowledge. They are of a similar character; and on the power possessed by the mind of manifesting these we bestow the name of the Regulative Faculty. Other names are Reason and Common Sense. This is not properly a faculty or active power, in the sense in which this phrase is applied to the other faculties. It is rather the sum of the fundamental principles or laws of thought.[1]

The first point under this classification is that External Perception is an intuitive faculty or faculty of immediate knowledge; while Memory and Imagination are representative or mediate in their action. We have thus to ask what precisely is meant by intuitive or immediate knowledge? And in the case of external perception, we have the further question, What precisely is the object or objects said to be immediately known? In the case of an immediate or intuitive act of knowledge, the mind apprehends an object or quality as *now*, or as *now* and *here* existing. I am conscious of the feeling of heat as a present fact,—that is an intuitive act. I am conscious of perceiving an extended or resisting object,—that also is an act of immediate or intuitive knowledge. But the heat I feel or the extension I perceive passes away. I still know that I felt the one and perceived the other. This is Mediate or Representative Knowledge. I now know, through a medium, a representation or image of what I no longer perceive. In plain words, I now remember; whereas, formerly, I felt or perceived.

[1] On this see above, p. 103.

The features of immediate and mediate knowledge may be thus stated and contrasted.

(1.) An act of immediate knowledge is simple: there is nothing beyond the mere consciousness of that which knows, of that which is known. An act of mediate knowledge, on the other hand, is complex; for the mind is both conscious of the act or mental image as its own, and of this as representative of or relative to an object beyond the sphere of consciousness.

(2.) In immediate knowledge the object is simple. The object in consciousness and the object in existence are the same. In mediate knowledge the object is twofold,—the object known and representing being different from the object unknown, except as represented. The immediate object should be called the *subjective-object* or *subject-object*; the mediate or unknown object the *object-object*.

(3.) Considered as judgments,—for every act of consciousness is a judgment or affirmation,—in an intuitive act, the object known is known as actually existing. The cognition is therefore assertory, inasmuch as the reality of that, its object, is given unconditionally as a fact. In a representative act, the represented object is unknown as actually existing; the cognition, therefore, is problematical, the reality of the object represented being given only as a possibility, on the hypothesis of the object representing.[1]

(4.) Representative knowledge is exclusively subjective; its immediate object is a mere mental modification, and its mediate object is unknown, except in so far as that modification represents it. Intuitive know-

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XXIII

ledge, on the other hand, if consciousness is to be credited, is either subjective or objective, for its single object may be either a phænomenon of the Ego or of the non-Ego,—either mental or material.

(5.) An intuitive cognition, as an act, is complete and absolute, as irrespective of aught beyond the domain of consciousness; whereas a representative cognition is incomplete, being relative to and vicarious of an existence beyond the sphere of actual knowledge. The object likewise of the former is complete, being at once known and real; in the latter, the object known is ideal, the real object unknown.

In Hamilton's view, every cognitive act which in one relation is mediate or representative, is in another immediate or intuitive. For an illustration and proof of this, let me call up the image of a particular object —say the *High Church.* In this act, what do I know immediately or intuitively? what mediately or by representation? I am conscious or immediately cognisant of the act of my mind, and therefore of the act which constitutes the mental image of the Church; but I am not conscious or immediately cognisant of the Church as existing. Still I know it; it is even the object of my thought. But I only know it through the mental image; and it is the object of thought, inasmuch as a reference to it is necessarily involved in the act of representation.

The term *immediate* requires attention here. Hamilton recognises that other sense of *immediate* in which it is opposed to thought proper, or the reference of an object to a class. When we think or recognise an object by relation to other things, under a certain notion or general term,—this too is mediate knowledge. He holds that there is a wide sense of *immediate*, according to which "we apprehend an individual thing, either through sense or its representation in the phantasy." This is "in a certain sort an absolute or irrespective knowledge," and it is justly named immediate, in contrast to thought proper or the comparative act of the understanding.[1]

This mediate or comparative act of reference to a class will vary with the quality of the object attended to by the thought: an individual object—the object of this time, or this time and this space—may thus be capable of reference to various classes of things. According to Hamilton's view, this is quite a subsequent reference, supervening upon perception or intuition. And he holds that there is an individual of perception prior to this altogether. What individualises a quality or object of intuition is the *now*, or the *now* and *here*, of the quality perceived or apprehended.[2]

At the same time, it would be entirely to mistake Hamilton's doctrine on this point to maintain that there is a perception of the quality *per se*, or apart from the general conditions of knowledge. On the contrary, he expressly tells us over and over again that intuition is subject to all the conditions of consciousness already enumerated,[3] — implying, therefore, judgment and discrimination, and the primary conditions of the thinkable. Further, under comparison, Hamilton shows the steps through which intuition passes up to the stage

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 804, Note B.
[2] On this whole matter see *Reid's Works*, Note D*, p. 878
[3] Cf. *Reid's Works*, Note D*, p. 877 *et seq.*

of logical generalisation and classification. He recognises the primary stage of the mere existential judgment,—the affirmation of the something—the discrimination of the Ego and non-Ego,—of the multiplicity in the successive and manifold presented to self-consciousness and perception,—the reference of the phænomena to substance,—the collation under the notion of causality. All this he recognises as really implied in and inseparable from intuition. And having stated this in its proper place, he thinks himself at liberty, and justly so, in dealing with intuition logically *per se*, as a matter thus fitted for scientific treatment. It is a mere misrepresentation to speak of external perception, or of intuition generally, as implying a separate or special kind of knowledge in the sense of an absolute divorce from the conditions of thought or consciousness in general. What can be more explicit than this?—

> "Apprehension and Judgment are really one, as each involves the other (for we apprehend only as we judge something to be, and we judge only as we apprehend the existence of the terms compared), and as together they constitute a single indivisible act of cognition; but they are logically double, inasmuch as by mental abstraction they may be viewed each for itself, and as a distinguishable element of thought."[1]

Of course he never thought it necessary to be constantly recalling those conditions, or restating them, whenever he referred to Perception as a special act.

As to the other and totally distinct position, that intuition can be developed out of these universal condi-

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 806.

tions set up *per se*, or as a basis of evolution, Hamilton would of course have said that such a procedure is wholly illegitimate, and as incapable of vindication as the doctrine of perception *per se*. The variety in the content of perception is wholly inexplicable on any hypothesis, or so-called theory, of the universal specifying itself in this or that quality of things. In this case every quality must be identical with every other. Difference is impossible.

It is thus clear that the criticism of Hamilton's doctrine on this point, which proceeds on the assumption that all thought is mediate,—or the application of a notion to the thing or object thought,—is totally inept. Hamilton thoroughly recognises this in the only sense in which it has a meaning. There is no thought, knowledge, or consciousness unless as embodying the most general or universal notions,—categories,—of intelligence,—such as self, not-self, being, and relation, &c. He holds, moreover, the application or the embodiment of those notions to be equally necessary in intuition and in representative cognition. But this, he maintains, does not abolish the distinction between Perception and Memory or Phantasy. This is a distinction subordinate to that of the universal and the particular in knowledge. And it depends on a new element introduced into knowledge—viz., that of a definite succession in time,—the contrast of present and past, and of present and future. The cognition in each case is in the wide sense equally mediate, but this common element in the two acts does not abolish the difference between me perceiving and me remembering what I perceived,—does not abolish the difference between past, present, and future. To adduce, therefore, this general feature of knowledge,—the mediate,—as a criticism of Hamilton's distinction, is to miss its whole point, and virtually to confound, in fact abolish, the two distinct acts of Intuition and Representation.

The word *real* or really existing,—as applied to the object of intuition,—needs some explanation. This is equivalent to "the object in itself." This again is convertible with "the object actually existing." Now what is actual existence according to Hamilton? It means the thing or object known as existing in its *when*, or in its *when* and *where*. The *when* and *where* of an object are immediately cognisable only if the *when* be *now* (*i.e.*, at the same moment with the cognitive act), and the *where* be *here* (*i.e.*, within the sphere of the cognitive faculty). Therefore a presentative or an intuitive knowledge is only competent of an object present to the mind either in time alone, or both in time and space.[1]

"The thing in itself" or "the object in itself" does not mean anything beyond the contrast of what we know in intuition and what we know in representation. It does not mean, as Hamilton has expressly told us, "things in themselves and out of relation to all else, in contrast to things in relation to and known by intelligences, like men, who know only under the conditions of plurality and difference."[2] The real with Hamilton is primarily the *existent* as opposed to the *non-existent*—a *something* in contrast to a *nothing*: it is further, and secondarily, the object perceived or the

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 809, Note B. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 805.

object of intuition, as contrasted with the image of it in memory or phantasy.

Now what, according to Hamilton, is the state of consciousness, or the testimony of consciousness in Perception or Perception proper? He maintains that in the simplest act of Perception there is

"the observation of two facts, or rather two branches of the same fact, *that I am, and that something different from me exists.* In this act I am conscious of myself as the perceiving subject and of an external reality as the object perceived; and I am conscious of both existences in the same indivisible moment of intuition. The knowledge of the subject does not precede or follow the knowledge of the object; neither determines, neither is determined by, the other. The two terms of correlation stand in mutual counterpoise and equal independence: they are given as connected in the synthesis of knowledge, but as contrasted in the antithesis of existence."[1]

It is this deliverance revealed in consciousness which leads mankind to believe equally in the reality of an external world and in the existence of their own minds. Consciousness declares our knowledge of material qualities to be intuitive. Even those philosophers who reject an intuitive perception find it impossible not to admit that their doctrine stands decidedly opposed to the voice of consciousness and the natural conviction of mankind.[2]

"The universal belief of mankind is, that the immediate object of the mind in perception is the material reality itself, and that as we perceive that object under its actual conditions, so we are no less conscious of its existence, indepen-

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[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 805. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 747, 748.

dently of our minds, than we are conscious of the existence of our own mind, independently of external objects."[1]

The main ground of objection to Realism has been and is now, that mind and matter are substances not only of different but of the most opposite natures,—separated, as some say, by the whole diameter of being; that what immediately knows must be of a nature correspondent, analogous, to that which is known; hence mind cannot be immediately conscious of matter.

This principle, as Hamilton shows, has had the widest effect on philosophical theories,—especially of perception. Out of it have come Representationalism in its cruder and finer forms, and generally the hypothesis devised for effecting an intelligible intercourse between mind and matter. But it is a mere arbitrary assumption,—without necessity, without even probability, in its favour. The counter-assumption of the need for a contrariety or opposition between subject knowing and object known, is of the same character.

"We know and can know nothing *a priori* of what is possible or impossible to mind, and it is only by observation and by generalisation *a posteriori* that we can ever hope to attain any insight into the question. But the very first act of our experience contradicts the assertion that mind, as of an opposite nature, can have no immediate cognisance of matter. In perception we have an intuitive knowledge of the Ego and the non-Ego, equally and at once."[2]

A further objection is, that the mind can only know immediately that to which it is immediately present. As external objects cannot come into the mind, or the mind

[1] *Reid's Works*, Note N, p. 964.

[2] *Metaphysics*, L. XXV.

go out to them, such presence is impossible; hence they can be only mediately known.

The principal hypothesis devised to get over this imaginary difficulty is that of Divine interference. On occasion of material impressions on the organs of sense, followed by sensations, we have a perception or immediate knowledge of the existence and qualities of the bodies by which the impressions are made. But we know no connection whatever between these sensations and the perceptions. This leads readily to the hypothesis that the cause of perception is a Divine act interposed on occasion of the sensation. This, as mystical and hyperphysical, and incompatible with an intuitive perception, may be set aside.[1]

But the assumption is without ground :—

(1.) The mind is not situated solely in the brain, or in any one part of the body. It is really present wherever we are conscious that it acts. "The soul is all in the whole, and all in every part." We have no more right to deny that the mind feels at the finger-points than to assert that it thinks exclusively in the brain. The report of consciousness is, that we actually perceive at the external point of sensation, and that we perceive the material reality.[2]

(2.) The external object perceived is not the distant object, as has been supposed.

"We perceive through no sense aught external, but what is in immediate relation and in immediate contact with its organ; and that is true which Democritus of old asserted,

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[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XXV.

[2] But on this point see note in *Reid's Works*, p. 861, for his matured doctrine.

that all our senses are only modifications of touch. Through the eye we perceive nothing but the rays of light in relation to, and in contact with, the retina; what we add to this perception must not be taken into account. The same is true of the other senses."[1] "In fact, the consciousness of external objects on this doctrine is not more inconceivable than the consciousness of species, or ideas on the doctrine of the schoolmen, Malebranche, or Berkeley. In either case, there is a consciousness of the non-Ego, and in either case the Ego and non-Ego are in intimate relation. There is, in fact, on this hypothesis no greater marvel that the mind should be cognisant of the external reality, than that it should be connected with a body at all. The latter being the case, the former is not even improbable, all inexplicable as both equally remain."[2]

He subsequently notices the objections of Hume and Fichte to intuitive perception, but, as he shows, they are really unworthy of serious attention.[3]

There being an intuitive perception of a non-Ego in the form of material reality, what, it may be asked, is the precise object, or what are the precise objects, of this intuition?

On this point there is a difference of opinion between Hamilton and the older Scottish philosophers, Reid and Stewart. Hamilton's view is, that the object of perception, in so far as it is a quality of the extra-bodily world,—or world beyond our organism,—is that which is in contact with the organ of sense. "An external object is only perceived inasmuch as it is in relation to our sense, and it is only in relation to our sense inasmuch as it is present to it." He therefore holds it to be improper and "a confusion of ideas," to speak

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XXV. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, L. XXVII.

as Reid does of the perception of a distant object in vision.

"To say that we perceive the sun and moon is a false or elliptical expression. We perceive nothing but certain modifications of light in immediate relation to our organ of vision. . . . It is not by perception, but by a process of reasoning, that we connect the objects of sense with existence beyond the sphere of immediate knowledge. It is enough that perception affords us the knowledge of the non-Ego at the point of sense. To arrogate to it the power of immediately informing us of external things which are only the causes of the object we immediately perceive, is either positively erroneous or a confusion of language." [1]

As will appear from what follows, he even limits more precisely the sphere of perception, and perception in vision. He finally denies any perception of external or extra-organic objects through sight, indeed through any sense except that of locomotive effort, yielding us resistance and extension. Hamilton, accordingly, censures Reid and others for speaking of the knowledge of the distant object in sight as a perception: it is in his view a mediate and inferential knowledge. It is clear from this that Hamilton's intuitive perception is extremely limited, so far as the extra-bodily world is concerned, and that it is but the germ of the processes through which we build up our knowledge—our actual or matured knowledge—of this outward world. At the same time, the precise limitation of the sphere of perception does not affect the character and value of the doctrine as a theory of our immediate contact or communion with the world of material reality.

1 *Metaphysics*, L. XXVII.

The line of speculation regarding the sphere of Perception thus laid down by Hamilton in 1836 was the one along which his thought worked, until the Dissertations D and D* appended to Reid's Works were printed and stereotyped in 1841 and 1842, though not published until November 1846. In these,—on the Qualities of Body, and on Perception and Sensation,—we have his matured and final doctrine. The general position taken by him is to distinguish between the two forms of material reality, represented by the bodily organism and the extra-bodily or extra-organic world; and, in this connection, to extend sensation from a mere state of the mind or consciousness to a consciousness or affection of the sentient organism, to limit perception to an apprehension of the locality and the relations of sensations, and to an apprehension of resistance in the extra-organic object. Still further, then, does he go in the line of making our sense-knowledge the result of a process of inference superadded to a comparatively limited sphere of immediate apprehension, intuition, or consciousness. All perception is an immediate or presentative cognition, and thus apprehends what is *now* and *here* existent. It is further a sensitive cognition, and thus apprehends the existence of no object out of its organism, or not in immediate correlation to its organism. But what precisely is Sensation? and what is Perception?—or Sensation and Perception, viewed in contrast? Sensation proper is the consciousness of an affection of the sentient bodily organism; not of the mind merely, but of the bodily organism as sentient or mind-pervaded. Perception proper, on the other hand, is conditioned by sensation, and is primarily (*a*) the apprehension of the locality of the sensation as in the bodily organism; (*b*) the apprehension of the sensations as like or unlike, and as out of or totally external to each other; (*c*) the apprehension of a resisting something external to our organism. Except, therefore, in this last instance, the sphere alike of Sensation and Perception is limited to the organic world, or our bodily organism.

"As animated, as the subject of affections of which I am conscious, the organism belongs to me; and of these affections which I recognise as mine, Sensation proper is the apprehension. As material, as the subject of extension, figure, divisibility, and so forth, the organism does not belong to me, the conscious unit; and of these properties which I do not recognise as mine, Perception proper is the apprehension."

Neither Sensation nor Perception proper, in as far as the latter apprehends the primary qualities of body in general, carries us beyond the bodily organism. Through these we apprehend nothing of the world ordinarily known as external and extra-organic. In sensation we know nothing of the cause of the organic affection of which we are conscious. A perception of the primary qualities does not originally and in itself reveal to us the existence and qualitative existence of aught beyond the organism apprehended by us as extended, figured, divided, &c. The primary qualities of things external to our organism we come to learn only by inference from the affections which we come to find they determine in our organism. In other words, by the senses of taste, smell, hearing, sight, touch proper, we get no direct knowledge whatever of any world external to our bodily organism. How, it may be asked, do we come to get any such perception or direct knowledge of this outward world? Only in one way.

"The existence of an extra-organic world is apprehended in the consciousness that our locomotive energy is resisted, and not resisted by aught in our organism itself. For in the consciousness of being thus resisted is involved as a correlative the consciousness of a resisting something external to our organism. Both are, therefore, conjunctly apprehended. This experience presupposes space, and motion in space."

This presupposition obviously with Hamilton affords no difficulty, for—

"every perception of sensation out of sensation will afford the occasion, in apprehending any one, of conceiving all the three extensions; that is, of conceiving space. . . . We are unable to imagine the possibility of that notion [space], not being always in our possession."[1]

We have thus both an *a priori* and an *a posteriori* knowledge of space, as a necessary condition of the possibility of thought, and as a percept contingently apprehended in this or that actual complexus of sensations.[2]

This doctrine shows clearly how far beside the mark is the usual commonplace criticism that Hamilton accepts the "common-sense," or "ordinary understanding," or "unreflective common-sense" of mankind, as a guarantee for his philosophical facts or data. On the contrary, his analysis of the common belief given in perception is as searching and thorough-going as anything in the history of the question. It is not an acceptance simply of what is usually received or believed, in its bare literality, but

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 882. [2] *Ibid.*

an eminently scientific, and at the same time philosophical, attempt to get at the true import of the fact; and this he does while he conserves the whole principle and meaning of the belief. As he pertinently remarks—

"It is sufficient to establish the simple fact, that we are competent, as consciousness assures us, immediately to apprehend through sense the non-Ego in certain limited relations; and it is of no consequence whatever, either to our certainty of the reality of a material world, or to our ultimate knowledge of its properties, whether by this primary apprehension we lay hold, in the first instance, on a larger or a lesser portion of its contents."[1]

With regard generally to this doctrine, which may be called the Organic and Locomotive theory of sensation and perception, there are difficulties, and, as I think, several needed supplements.

In the first place, it obviously carries us but a very little way on the line of building up our matured knowledge of the material world, in its extra-organic form, as that which lies beyond the bodily organism. The distance from the consciousness of the sentient organism, with its localised sensations and perceptions of extension,—and even from the apprehension of the resisting something,—to our full world experience, is a long and tedious route. How and why we come to refer our sensations to extra-organic causes are questions that wait solution.

In the second place, it is not clear that the localising of the sensation in the bodily organism necessarily implies that it is an affection of this organism, even as sentient or animated. We may localise without going

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 814.

this length, or holding that the sensation as sensation is more than a purely mental state. The localising need mean nothing more than the reference, intuitive or acquired, of the sensation to its proximate cause or concause in the bodily organism. We may place, as Müller holds, the sensation in touch at the spot where the nerve normally terminates, without implying that the sensation itself is actually an affection of the organism. A sensation spread over a surface is hardly congruous with the quality of indivisibility which a sensation proper undoubtedly possesses.

In the third place, it seems to be going too far to say that our apprehension of an extra-organic object is due to resisted locomotion alone. Contact and pressure, it might be contended, equally lead to this apprehension. In simple contact, when the hand is at rest and yet in contact with the extra-organic surface, there is ground for supposing that there is the apprehension of a twofold surface—viz., that of the extended sentient organism and that of the object in immediate correlation. Yet there is no effort at locomotion.

In pressure, again, from without upon the organism, and tending to compression of it, there may be the apprehension both of externality and extension, while there is no effort on the part of the body towards locomotion. In fact, this is one of the most common forms of our experience. This could hardly be realised without at least an intuition of outness, of externality in space.

In a note Hamilton recognises this point, but imperfectly. He says: "The quasi-primary quality is always simply a resistance to our inorganic volition [to move] as realised in a muscular effort. But, be it remembered, there may be muscular effort, even if a body weighs or is pressed upon a part of the muscular frame apparently at rest."[1] This is obviously an afterthought, and it is not sufficient for the requirements of the case.

In the fourth place, it seems doubtful whether the apprehension of resistance or of a resisting something as extra-organic in the locomotive effort is fitted or sufficient to give the intuition of extension or an extended thing. The intuition of resistance might be quite well satisfied by a force—a degree or intension of force—in correlation with the organism. Electricity would be sufficient to impede the locomotive effort; yet we should hardly regard this as adequate to give us the intuition of an extended object, though it might be apprehended as external. These considerations tend to show that the locomotive power has received somewhat exaggerated importance as a factor in our apprehension of extra-organic objects. The three sources of knowledge—Contact, Pressure, and Locomotion—seem to me to be required to go together, and yield a conjoint result, ere we can form the complex notion of body, — as external, extended, and resisting. After that it would be easy to show how by association, induction, and inference we connect with it our subjective sensations.[2]

Hamilton it should be kept in mind, nowhere pro-

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 866.

[2] I am inclined even to go further, and to hold that, besides the sources now mentioned, we have other direct perceptions of outward reality. But on this and other points, especially the true criterion of organic and extra-organic body, the limits of this volume restrict me from entering.

fesses to find in perception the material world in its essence, nature *per se*, or in what may be called its transcendent reality. He constantly proclaims that of "the absolute existence" of the material world we perceive nothing,—indeed ultimately know nothing. But he not less strenuously contends for the fact that we perceive and thus know more than a mere sensation or state of consciousness. We perceive the quality of a not-self or non-conscious reality. This is intuitively known. It is known as independent of, and distinct from, any quality of me, the percipient, in the act of perception. There is a simultaneous consciousness of the quality and of me the percipient. The knowledge of the subject perceiving does not precede nor follow the knowledge of the object perceived: neither determines, neither is determined by, the other. The doctrine is thus one at once of Realism and Dualism. As the knowledge of the object or quality is not before that of the subject, Materialism is precluded; as the knowledge of the subject perceiving is not before the object perceived, Idealism is equally proscribed.

This quality is more than, it is over and above, the sensation; yet it is still relative to us and our modes of perceiving, while existing in antithesis to us in and during the act of perception. This doctrine is perfectly compatible with the declaration that the substrate of the quality is unperceived,—nay, is ultimately incognisable,—or that we cannot dogmatise about it. The only inconsistency is the supposition entertained by Mill, that because the quality perceived is not regarded as a state of the conscious subject, because it is regarded as the quality of a non-Ego, therefore it must be held to be known and to exist, as we perceive it, as absolute transcendent material reality, or out of and above all our perception and all perception. But this is a pure misconception. *What* we already perceive is the first question—quality of Ego or non-Ego: *whether* we perceive it directly (intuitively) or representatively,—this also is a preliminary question. But holding a quality of a non-Ego—that is, something other than a sensation—to be intuitively perceived, we are at perfect liberty thereafter to refrain from further dogmatism, or to adopt the view of the incognisability of its ultimate ground, substance, or cause.

The problem which Hamilton presents to himself appears to be this. What, looking to our apprehension of the fact, and our conception of body founded thereon, are the necessary and essential marks or features in our notion of body? In other words, what are the elements in and through which we must conceive body, if it is to be conceived at all? There are features in body under which we may and do apprehend and conceive it, and yet in their absence the notion of body would not be annihilated. The answer to this question, then, is that the Primary Qualities, dependent on the apprehension and notion of body as space-filling, and therefore as ultimately incompressible, are the essential elements or conditions of our conception of body. These are—(1) Extension, (2) Divisibility, (3) Size, (4) Density or Rarity, (5) Figure, (6) Absolute Incompressibility, (7) Mobility, (8) Situation. All such are deducible from the space-filling. The Secundo-Primary qualities, dependent on the apprehension of the fact and mode or degree of resistance, are contingent or accidental. They may be dispensed with, and yet the conception of body remain. And the Secondary Qualities — the sensations — are merely consciousnesses in the organism of effects ultimately learned to be caused by obscure properties in the extra-organic objects. But the peculiarity of the secundo-primary and the secondary qualities is that they are apprehended and conceived as experienced only in certain of the senses,—that they may pass away, and yet our apprehension and conception of body remain. Body, therefore, is to us an object apprehended and conceived as possessing certain qualities — extension, figure, &c., which depend on the occupation of space.

Now there are numerous expressions in Hamilton which indicate this objectivity, and nothing more. Yet these may be construed in a sense which he did not contemplate. We have the following expressions: The primary qualities are "attributes of body as body," whereas the others are of this and that body, —properly *qualities*, *suchnesses*. The primary express "the universal relations of body to itself,"—"the possibility of matter absolutely,"—whereas the secundo-primary express only the "possibility of the material universe as actually constituted," the secondary "the possibility of our relation as sentient existences to that universe." The primary are "conceived as necessary and perceived as actual." The secundo-primary are "perceived and conceived as actual;" the secondary are "inferred and conceived as possible." The three sets are to be roundly regarded as mathematical, mechanical, physiological. Again: "Our nervous organism, as a body simply, can possibly exist, and can possibly be known as existent, only under those necessary conditions of all matter which have been denominated its primary qualities." The primary qualities or modes of the non-Ego are "definite in number and exhaustive." The secondary are "indefinite." There are "any number of unknown capacities in our animal organism," and "any number of unknown powers in matter" to excite these.[1]

No doubt, some of these expressions, taken abstractly, might be interpreted as meaning that we have an actual and necessary knowledge of what body is in itself, apart from our perception, as self-subsisting, and whether we perceive it or not; that we have got in this the knowledge of matter or body *per se*,—the transcendent reality. But Hamilton hurries straightway to disown this interpretation. *Objective*, we are told, means only a contrast to subjective. It means the perception of

"a quality of the non-Ego in immediate relation to my mind. *Subjective* means, when I know it only as the hypothetical or occult cause of an affection of which I am conscious, or when I think it only mediately through a subject-object, or representation in and of the mind."[2]

Again:—

"In saying that a thing is known in itself, I do not mean that this object is known in its absolute existence—that is, out of relation to us. This is impossible; for our knowledge is only of the relative. To know a thing in itself or immediately is an expression used merely in contrast to the knowledge of a thing in a representation or mediately."[3]

This reference—what may be called the Ontological

[1] See *Reid's Works*, pp. 846, 858, 865, 866. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 846.
[3] See *Reid's Works*, p. 866.

—is no doubt the least explained point in Hamilton's philosophy of Perception. Do we actually perceive and conceive in those primary qualities body as body *per se*,—as that which exists and subsists whether we perceive it or not—in its own actual, absolute reality,—the transcendent thing of existence?

My view is that Hamilton says no to this question. We have no knowledge in perception, or in conception which is founded wholly on empirical perception, of body as body,—of body in its absolute super-sensible existence. We have a mixed or rather complex cognition in which the quality of a non-Ego appears: this is not a sensation or state of consciousness simply; it is not a mere quality of the Ego; it is a quality of the non-Ego, such as it must appear to our perception. As a time and space object, we know this quality as a reality. In time and space it is permanent, uniform to us; and that is all we can say, or need to know.

Whether the substance, or power on which it immediately depends, is to be conceived as atomistic or dynamistic, is not settled. But, settle it as you will, there is the great incognisable beyond, into which atomism or dynamism itself runs back. These would be but discovered forms or grounds of the quality perceived and still relative in knowledge. But surely it is something to have made out what in our perception and thought body is, and must be to us—what it constantly and permanently remains for us—what if it were changed from, it would cease to be the object we know and name. Unless we can go back to infinity in the science of things, is not this an adequate resting-place for finite knowledge? And what more shall we ever be able to make of the essential in body than simply those primary qualities, and of the actual in body than this form of resistance to our powers—the fact of a force,—and those sentient affections which are either modes of our animated frame or their mental results,—limited, constituted, made definite by the fundamental susceptibilities of our organism? The permanency and the uniformity of this experience, in all its phases, is for us the true reality of things.

The fundamental element of difference between the position of Hamilton and that of Kant in relation to perception is that the former, by his immediate apprehension of the quality of the not-self, puts himself in a relation to material reality, which Kant precluded himself from doing at the outset, and which he could not accomplish in the end. Kant never rose above the traditional psychology which offered merely a sensation, impression, or affection of the conscious subject, as the matter of external perception, or, as he puts it,

> "the apprehension of representations as modifications of the soul in intuition."[1]

This rejection of the immediate apprehension of a non-Ego, decided, as Hamilton says, the destiny of his philosophy.

> "The external world, as known, was only a phænomenon of the internal; and our knowledge in general only of self, the objective only subjective, and truth only the harmony of thought with thought, not of thought with things."[2]

Hamilton holds further that Kant's subsequent attempt

[1] *Kritik*, Trans. An., I. ii. s. 2; Hartenstein's ed., p. 611.
[2] *Metaphysics*, App. (b), p. 400.

to prove the reality of a material world above and beyond apprehension and consciousness,[1] is a failure, and, in fact, in contradiction with his own philosophy. If the knowledge of a material non-Ego be not given or immediate, a proof of its reality in any form is an impossibility,—nay, it may even be said the notion on such terms is an impossibility.

Hamilton further differs from Kant as to Time and Space. These he holds with Kant to be necessities or necessary forms of consciousness; but he regards them also—at least space in concrete extension,—as a percept, —an object of experience actually perceived. They are in no sense forms imposed upon objects,—subjective spectra through or in which we set objects, or which we use in constituting them. We are thus not precluded from regarding the time and space world as a real subsisting world of things; and those forms are more than mere subjective ways of beholding or rather constituting things. They are conditions of things, not of us the percipients merely. There is an immediate knowledge or consciousness of the external object as extended. The extension as known and the extension as existing are convertible,—known because existing, and existing since known.[2]

As Hamilton remarks, the discrimination of the primary and secondary qualities of matter or body is essential to Natural Realism. On the system of Kant, and indeed in German philosophy generally, this distinction is not taken into account. As to the Kantian system itself—

[1] See *Kritik,* Vorrede (1787), Hartenstein, p. 32, *Supp.* xxi.

[2] *Reid's Works*, p. 842.

"it is," says Hamilton, "built on its positive negation, or rather its positive reversal. For Kant's transcendental Idealism not only contains a general assertion of the subjectivity of all our perceptions; its distinctive peculiarity is, in fact, its special demonstration of the absolute subjectivity of space or extension, and in general of the primary attributes of matter—these constituting what he calls the *form*, as the secondary constitute what he calls the *matter* of our sensible intuitions (see in particular Proleg., s. 13, anm. 2)."[1]

The different use of the terms *object*, *objective*, by Kant and Hamilton, lead to mistake on this matter. Object and objective with the latter refer to the quality of a non-Ego in immediate correlation with an act of the conscious-subject, as the mode or degree of resistance in locomotion. With Kant the meanings are many and various. The most relevant sense is perhaps that implied where Kant defines concept (*Begriff*) as—

"the one consciousness which unites into one representation the part by part perceived, and afterwards reproduced manifold."[2]

This view of the matter given to the concept, or even of the known object, is neither adequate nor self-consistent. It is not the case that every individual object perceived is made up in this way. The definition can refer only to such objects as are given in parts in space, or in time, or in time and space. These are not the whole of the objects of knowledge, nor are they even the whole of the objects of which we are conscious in External Perception. A sensation felt and known by me as a state of consciousness is not known in this way,

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 845.
[2] *Kritik*, Trans. An., I. ii. s. 2; Hart., p. 614.

nor, though in knowledge, is it "an object," in this wholly narrow sense of the term. A taste, an odour, a muscular feeling, an apprehension of resistance, is not known by me in the way of part after part perception. Each of these sensations or objects of consciousness is a wholly indivisible unit, and it is only a false and futile psychology which would represent it as anything else. The sensation is wholly indivisible,—of definite degree or intensity,—but not composed of part after part apprehended and reproduced. It is surprising that any one who has really followed the course of modern psychology should make such a statement as that every sensation in consciousness is necessarily made up of a series of parts or points. This is only true of an "object" which is constituted by the apprehension of successive points in time, or coexisting points in space. But this is a comparatively narrow class of object. We do not so apprehend the sensations, taste, odour, muscular feeling, or the percept of resisting force. These sensations or percepts, when added together, do not for the first time form "an object" in this Kantian sense. They form a complexus or series of objects, each of which is as much an object of apprehension, and therefore of knowledge, as the complexus itself can possibly be.

But further, an object which supposes a series of parts after parts perceived, implies the several perceptions and consciousness of each part in succession. Otherwise the object as a manifold could never be made up or known. The objects in space mainly fulfil this requirement,—such as line, surface, length, and breadth. In these we go on to the whole object apprehended by adding part known to part known. But "a manifold before you" ere we can perceive any individual object as such is either a meaningless or a self-contradictory expression. There is no need for "a manifold," as it is called, in the majority of cases; and ere you can have the manifold, you need to have the parts of the manifold in succession, and apprehended severally and in their relations. In each of those apprehensions there is an object known, and known in relation to the conscious-subject. There can be no putting together in the shape of "a manifold" in the way of representation of points never consciously presented,—not in fact already objects of perception and knowledge. And it might be added, that not only is the notion of object slipped into this manifold, as an element, before the individual object is contemplated, but the category of quantity — ay, and the notion of a permanent self-conscious subject—is implied, as already given, all through. So that if we are to organise knowledge from the beginning, we must go a good deal deeper than "the manifold of sensation." Apart altogether from the question thus suggested by "the manifold of sensation," it is quite clear that the superposition on this by the conscious-subject of subjective forms, of time and space—the representation according to the schema of time in imagination and the imposition of category in virtue of the unity of self-apperception—are wholly impotent to raise sensations or affections into a real or material world, —into an external world in any proper sense of the word. Necessary connection of impressions or sensations—the objectivity of them in Kant's language—so that they show the same relations to every human intelligent, this may be got, but that is all. And sensations do not thus become, cannot become, perceptions of objects within and without,—our world of experience. A necessary and universal connection of subjective sensations may be opposed to Hume's view of contingent and customary conjunction; but that is all. Real objectivity in the sense of externality, in the form of extension or force, as qualities of a non-Ego, we cannot reach on such a method.

There is in Kant the constant repetition of the doctrine of the limitation of our knowledge in External Perception to representations,—wholly subjective states, —and representations (as he is often driven to put it) of an incognisable transcendent object,—which is a simple absurdity,—and representations caused by this object, admitting no predicate or attribute, yet a cause, —which is a simple contradiction. Yet, finally, in his second edition, he offers a *proof* of "the existence of objects in space outside myself." The gist of it is—

"I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time; this presupposes something permanent in the perception; this permanent cannot be anything within me, because in me are only changing representations; the perception of this permanent is possible only through a thing outside me; the determination of my existence in time is, therefore, possible only by the existence of real things which I perceive outside me. Hence the consciousness of my own existence is, at the same time, an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things." He adds, "The immediate consciousness of the existence of external things is here not assumed, but proved."[1]

Why can the changes in my representations or subjective states in time not be known through the perma-

[1] Compare Müller, vol. i. p. 476.

nent Ego of consciousness? Only because it is wrongly assumed that this Ego is itself a representation,—that it is not intuitively apprehended as a fact, and known as a permanent fact in the succession. If the Ego be permanent, and be known as such in and through the successive states, this is enough to render the idea of the changes in me possible and actual. But, apart from this, is the consciousness of these changes only possible through "the existence of real things which I perceive outside me"? Why may not the change be satisfied by a permanent spiritual Power with whom I am in communion? Does the need for a permanent imply specifically the kind of permanent? But does the perception of the external thing necessarily give me or imply its permanency? The perception of the moment certainly does not guarantee the permanency through other moments of the thing perceived. This permanency, if it be at all, is not a perception, but a conception subsequent to the perception,—even an inference. Yet this permanency, known indirectly, inferentially, is an "immediate consciousness"! There is the necessary and immediate consciousness of the permanency of real things outside me, and yet this consciousness is the result of inference, and problematical inference. But if this be so,—if there be no immediate consciousness or perception of the permanency of real things outside me, the process is useless, on Kant's own showing, for the purpose of enabling me to know the determination of my states in time; there is no permanent of real things immediately perceived, and there is none implied as a correlative to the changes in the states of consciousness. "The scandal," therefore, "to philosophy and to human reason in general," which Kant alleges as attaching to our accepting the existence of things without us on faith only, still remains, so far as his effort is concerned. But the truth is, this is not a matter of faith only; it is a matter of direct or intuitive knowledge, inexplicable certainly, and therefore only ultimately a faith,—yet not more so than, as Kant himself expressly admits, is the "how of the permanent in time in general, the coexistence of which with the variable produces the concept of change."[1] Realism asks and requires nothing more than an admission of this sort to vindicate its principle.

[1] *Kritik*, Vor., 2d ed. p. 37; Müller, vol. ii. p. 387.

CHAPTER VI.

PERCEPTION—THE REPRESENTATIVE THEORY AND INFERENTIAL REALISM—HAMILTON AND BROWN.

There is a doctrine of Perception which arises from a violation of the integrity of the fact as given in consciousness. This is the great rival theory to that of Natural Realism. It may be called *Cosmothetic Idealism*, *Hypothetical Realism*, or *Hypothetical Dualism*. The upholders of this theory regard the object of consciousness in perception as only a modification of the percipient subject, or at least a phænomenon numerically different from the object it represents,—yet maintain the reality of an external world. This reality, and the knowledge of it, the scheme seeks by various hypotheses to establish and explain. This is the most inconsequent of all systems, yet it has been embraced under various forms by the immense majority of philosophers.[1]

Hamilton, as is well known, regards Brown's doctrine of Perception as that of Hypothetical Realism. In other words, he regards Brown as holding—(1.) That the existing external world is not directly or immedi-

[1] *Discussions*, p. 56.

ately apprehended, but posited on the principle of suggestion or inference. (2.) That our knowledge of it is representational; and "that the representative object is a modification of the mind, non-existent out of consciousness; the idea and its perception being only different relations of an act (state) really identical."[1]

Mill holds in regard to Brown's doctrine that it is not one of representative perception at all, and that Hamilton was entirely wrong in regarding it as such, besides being as usual inconsistent in his criticism. He maintains further that Brown's doctrine of Perception was not even a doctrine of mediate knowledge, and that it was thus not different from Hamilton's own theory on the subject.[2] It can very easily be shown that not one of these statements is correct, and that the inconsistencies which Mill imagines he has found in Hamilton's criticism arise wholly from his misconception of Hamilton's doctrine of Representation and mediate knowledge, and even to a great extent of Brown's theory of Perception, or rather his failure to observe the two differing theories which run all through Brown's writings on this subject. The only reason for noticing Mill's criticism at all, is that the doctrine really held by Hamilton may be seen to stand out in clear relief against misrepresentation.

In the outset, Mill mistakes Hamilton's doctrine of Representative knowledge in its most essential point. It is not the case, as Mill alleges,[3] that representative knowledge with Hamilton always means knowledge of a thing "by means of something which is like the thing

[1] *Discussions*, p. 57. [2] *Exam.* c. x., p. 196 *et seq.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

itself." It is not even true that representative knowledge need mean this in any case. The representation need not be like the thing represented, but, as Hamilton says, it must be "conformable with the original,"—with "the intuition which it represents." [1]

This may or may not be a relation of resemblance. In memory, the picture of the past event presented must give us the event as it at first appeared to the sense; but there is no likeness as of a painting to the original. The elements of the painting, and the elements of the thing painted, are of the same material type: they are of the same common genus. The two are thus alike. But in memory the image is a mental or spiritual image which may represent a material or physical fact, whose elements are of a totally different sort from the elements of the mental picture. Material qualities in intuition may be represented by spiritual qualities in memory. There is no analogy here "like that of a picture to its original." Memory represents to me a scene in space; but the image or mode of mind is not necessarily extended. A picture which represents a scene in space is necessarily extended; it is in fact simply another form of space.

Mill is thus mistaken in supposing that a doctrine which makes the representative medium a sensation—something not like in kind to the thing represented—necessarily escapes being representational. The character of the medium in this respect matters nothing, if only it be supposed capable of giving us a knowledge more or less adequate of the original, as it would be presented to us, or as it exists in experience. The whole

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 811.

series of philosophers who hold what Hamilton calls the finer form of the representative hypothesis,—that the medium is a mere state of the mind,—could not have been classed by Hamilton as representationalists at all, if he had held what Mill attributes to him, a resemblance in character between the medium and the thing represented; and certain of the earlier Cosmothetical Idealists, instead of holding, as Mill attributes to the whole of them, the doctrine of similarity between the thing represented and the medium, held the very reverse. They held the doctrine of species in perception, because the species was of the nature of the mind, and thus mediated between the two incompatible substances, matter and mind. Conformity with the intuitions represented, or conformity with the thing represented, thus in no degree implies likeness in the medium.

Surely it is conceivable that my knowledge of an event—say, the rapid sweep of the river which I saw yesterday—may be conformable to it, without implying that the mental picture is "like" in quality to the physical motion I saw, or even a form of motion at all. Conformity and its absence between the presentation and the representation in no way depend on the likeness of the medium. The medium and mental picture would be the same in character and nature if I wrongly represented the current I saw as running north, instead of south; yet this representation would not be conformable to the intuition. This sentence, already quoted, might alone have kept Mill right; but there is a passage in which Hamilton has expressly pointed out the difference between "similarity in existence" and "similarity in representation."

"If," he says, "we modify the obnoxious language of Descartes and Locke, and, instead of saying that the ideas or notions of the primary qualities *resemble*, merely assert that they *truly represent* these objects,—that is, afford us such a knowledge of them as we should have were an immediate intuition of the extended reality in itself competent to man,"[1] then Descartes, Locke, and Reid would be found at one. "The whole difficulty and dispute on this point is solved on the old distinction of *similarity in existence* and *similarity in representation*, which Reid and our modern philosophers have overlooked."

He refers here to a passage quoted from Biel,[2] in which the distinction between the material object and the spiritual image is clearly drawn. Representative acts are "*figmenta*," not because of similarity in being or essence (*in essendo*), or that they are of the same species with the objects represented, but because of similarity in representation,—that is, they represent things with their properties as they really are presented to us. The non-resembling character, accordingly, of Brown's modifications, or sensations, or states of mind, to the unapprehended reality or unknown cause, does not save him from being a representationalist.

But Mill errs still more vitally when he fails to see that presentation or intuition is, in Hamilton's view, essential to representation. There is no point on which Hamilton has more strongly and more properly insisted than this,—that what we represent in memory was once necessarily an object of intuition,—that what we represent in imagination as possible was, in its parts at least, an object of intuition,—that we can conceive even no part of the past or the future, the elements of which did

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 842; cf. *Discussions*, p. 66. [2] P. 814.

not appear in direct, presentative, or intuitive knowledge. Mill never got a glimpse of this fundamental doctrine, and has thus wholly misconceived not only Hamilton's doctrine, but its application to theories of representative perception. Mill actually tells us that Hamilton

"affirms that we cannot possibly recognise a mental modification to be representative of something else, unless we have a present knowledge of that something else otherwise obtained." [1]

Of course, Hamilton never said anything so absurd. What he said was, that we never can represent what has not been in itself, or in its elements, presented to us. A present knowledge of the object represented, as a condition of the representation, is simply ludicrous. If we had this "present knowledge," the representation would be the idlest act in the world.

Mill is, if possible, still further astray when he supposes that

"in treating of memory Sir W. Hamilton requires a process of thought precisely similar to that which, when employed by opponents, he declares to be radically illegitimate." [2]

There is no analogy whatever in the two cases. The representationalist professes to have an image or representation in consciousness of that which he never perceived or found in intuition,—which he never directly knew. The very hypothesis of representation is founded on this assumption; for if we could directly perceive the external reality, we should not need to have recourse to representation in order to know it,—be it a *tertium quid*

[1] *Exam.*, c. x., p. 204. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

or a form of mind merely. The representational theories thus absolutely violate every condition of the representative knowledge implied in memory, and no critic could have made a greater blunder than in supposing the two processes the same. What Hamilton properly charges against representationalism in its cruder and finer form alike is, that the mind is blindly determined to represent the reality which it never apprehended,—never knew. Mill understands this so little that he says—

"it is a literal description of what takes place in memory."

Mill's conception of memory must be a peculiar one. We are able evidently on his principles to remember and represent to ourselves an event which we never actually perceived or witnessed. We are able also to believe that this event took place. Memory is merely a blind determination to represent what was never actually an object of direct experience.

But was Brown's doctrine one of representationalism? The truth on this point is, that Brown held unconsciously two distinct theories on the subject of perception. The one may be described more properly as a doctrine of Inferential Realism; the other was substantially a doctrine of Representationalism. In the former doctrine Brown approximates to the somewhat crude view of perception which Reid gave in his first work, the 'Inquiry,' though even here Mill is wrong in thinking the theories of Reid and Brown identical. The theory of inferential Realism may be stated simply as teaching the suggestion and inference of an unapprehended something, called an outward world, from subjective states known directly as sensations and affections of our consciousness. But as this unapprehended something may be a not-self, and yet not material substance, it is necessary to hold in a theory of Realism that this something is known to be corporeal or material, and existent in space. Brown holds both those positions; although the former may be held apart from the latter, as in Berkeleyanism.

Mill ventures on the dogmatic assertion that Brown's doctrine of Perception was not even one of mediate perception. The reason he gives is that in Brown's view there is no *tertium quid* between the mind perceiving and the outward object. There is only "the perceptive act," which is "the mind itself perceiving." Hence Brown's doctrine is the same as Sir W. Hamilton's own view: "for Brown thinks we have on the occasion of certain sensations an instantaneous and irresistible conviction of an outward object."[1] A more inaccurate view, alike of the doctrines of Brown and Hamilton, could not be given. Brown's "perceptive act" is a mediate act or process, for it is a process of inference from the known to the unknown, or at least to the unapprehended,—from the state of mind called sensation, which is all we apprehend or can apprehend, on his view, to the outward permanent world, which, unless as the cause of certain sensations, is wholly unknown and unknowable. The words quoted, moreover, as a description of Hamilton's doctrine, are such as would excite a smile in the merest sciolist in his writings.

But take the one form of Brown's doctrine—that represented by Mill as the proper one. This is, that "an

[1] *Exam.*, c. x., p. 198.

unknown something," or "something external" is suggested to us by our sensations,—we knowing this "something" only as a cause of these sensations and affections, but not any one of the attributes which it possesses in itself. Even on this view of Brown's doctrine, the knowledge we have is properly mediate. The thing itself—the something external—is not known or apprehended by us directly, or as it exists; it is not apprehended in its own attributes. It is known only in and through the sensation which it causes in us, and this is properly a mediate, not an immediate or intuitive knowledge. On this view, indeed, the sensations need not represent corresponding qualities in the something external, though at another time Brown says they do; but all the same, as our knowledge of this something is merely through its effects, it is emphatically a mediate knowledge. The thing apprehended—the sensation—is not convertible with the reality existing: the existence of the reality is inferred from the knowledge of the sensation.

But the truth is, that Brown's doctrine throughout is essentially one of mediate knowledge in Perception. He expressly limits knowledge or consciousness in Perception to a mere state of the mind—an affection of the mind—the mind existing in some particular affection. In this respect there is no distinction between sensation and perception. Each has equally an object, or equally no object. In each case there is simply a reference of a subjective state to an (objective) cause or occasion. On this point even, as to the precise cause or its nature, Brown, as we shall see, is not consistent. But he has no idea whatever of the possibility of immediate perception in Hamilton's sense, and even, I venture to say, in Reid's later sense. Whenever a glance of this dawns on him, he scouts the very possibility of the doctrine. He says :—

"What I learn by perception of the colour, or softness, or shape, or fragrance, or taste of a peach, is a certain state of my own mind, for my mind surely can be conscious only of its own feelings."[1]

Again, he says :—

"The material object itself he [Reid] surely could not consider as forming a part of the perception, which is a state of the mind alone. To be the object of perception is nothing more than to be the foreign cause or occasion on which this state of the mind directly or indirectly arises."[2]

There is in these passages, and in others following them, not only a denial of the possibility of immediate perception; there is the limitation even of knowledge in general to mental affections,—a limitation which logically excludes the possibility of a knowledge alike of external reality, other minds, and Deity. These can, in fact, on this doctrine, be regarded only as hypothetical causes of certain mental affections in us. Our whole knowledge lies within the circle of subjectivity; the real universe is wholly incognisable. That the external world, if known at all on such a doctrine, can be known only through our own subjective affections as their cause, and thus mediately, there cannot be the slightest question.

But with all this, Brown most explicitly holds by the ordinary realism as a matter of belief. Nothing can be

[1] L. XXIV., p. 154. [1] L. XXV., pp. 159, 160; cf. p. 166.

stronger than his language on this point. He accepts in the most unreserved manner "the belief in the real existence of an external universe," "in the existence of foreign changeable external bodies as separate from the mind, and of a corporeal frame capable of being affected by other bodies."[1] This is a belief which no scepticism can shake. "It is physically impossible not to admit" that such a world does exist.[2] It is as impossible to disbelieve the reality of some external cause of our sensations as it is to disbelieve the reality of the sensations themselves.[3]

The only question which he thinks it possible to raise is as to how, or in what circumstances, this belief has arisen.[4] This is for him the problem of perception. How he has solved it, and whether his solution is at all legitimate, are separate points to be noticed in the sequel.

On what ground, if any, it may be asked, did Brown, while repudiating an immediate knowledge of an external world, still hold by the belief in its reality? Hamilton says—

> "He [Brown] assumes the existence of an external world beyond the sphere of consciousness, exclusively on the ground of an irresistible belief in its unknown reality. Independent of this belief, there is no reasoning on which the existence of matter can be vindicated: the logic of the idealist he admits to be unassailable."[5]

This is true; but it is necessary to add that Brown has attempted to show, by a sort of inference, *how* this

[1] L. XXII., p. 135. [2] *Ibid.* [3] L. XXIV., p. 151.
[4] L. XXII., p. 135. [5] *Discussions*, p. 56.

knowledge and belief have arisen in the mind. His theory is a sort of inferential realism, and it is fallacious. But it requires express notice, even to show its fallacy.

To the inferential realist there are but two modes open,—that of suggestion, and that of inference. Reid, in the beginning, countenanced the first. Brown accepts the second. Mill has not seen the distinction between these two methods, and he is thoroughly mistaken in identifying Brown's method with that of Reid.

In his first work, the 'Inquiry,' Reid's doctrine is no doubt properly a form of inferential realism. The sensation, a purely subjective state, suggests to us the notion and the reality of an agent or quality different from itself,—not a state of mind at all. Thus tactile feeling suggests to us for the first time the notions, and the belief in the reality, of hardness, smoothness, extension, and motion,—to be reckoned as primary qualities of body. But taking even this, the most favourable form of Reid's doctrine of perception, Mill is mistaken in supposing that it is identical with that of Brown. For, in the first place, the objects or qualities which Reid holds to be suggested or immediately inferred are qualities thereafter known and recognised as properties of body; whereas Brown's external object, also suggested or inferred, is, after the inference, an object whose properties are not known. It is simply an external cause of subjective states, call these states sensations or primary qualities. Between the tactile feeling and the extension as notion there is no difference in character. They are equally states of the mind, and of the mind alone,—equally, in fact, sensations. The non-Ego of Brown is only "something external;" all that he supposes us capable of knowing regarding it is, that it is the cause of certain affections in us. This is Brown's explicitly declared doctrine, though, as we shall see, he does not keep consistently to it.

But, in the second place, Reid's principle of inference and suggestion of the external object is wholly different from Brown's. Reid, in the beginning, holds that the sensation suggests the primary qualities, though a specific, original, instinctive principle. Given certain sensations, these necessarily imply the notion and belief of certain other or ulterior facts. Brown, on the other hand, explicitly discards this specific principle.

> "It is not by any peculiar intuition we are led to believe in the existence of things without. I consider this belief as the effect of that more general intuition, by which we consider a new consequent in any series of ascertained events as the sign of a new antecedent." [1]

In fact, Brown considers it an instance of the universal law of Causality as interpreted by himself. The inference on such a principle is easily shown to be utterly impossible.

In the first place, there is no knowledge or apprehension of this reality by any of the senses of Smell, Taste, Hearing, Touch proper: the sensations or affections of those senses are simply states or modifications of mind, but they tell us nothing of an external reality or cause. Consciousness cannot in these, and indeed in any of its forms, transcend its own state. In none of these senses, moreover, do we obtain the two fundamental elements of our notion of matter—extension and resistance.

[1] L. XXIV., p. 151.

We have a notion not only of extension but of "external existence." The notion of extension is not identical with this.

"To what, then," he asks, "are we to ascribe the belief of external reality which now accompanies our sensations of touch?" His explanation is as follows: "It appears to me to depend on the feeling of resistance, which, breaking in without any known cause of difference on an accustomed series of feelings, and combining with the notion of extension, and consequently of divisibility, previously acquired, furnishes the elements of that compound notion which we term the notion of matter. Extension and resistance—to combine these simple notions *in something which is not ourselves*, and to have the notion of matter, are precisely the same thing."[1]

This is a singular and glaring specimen of *petitio principii*. Whence our belief in external or non-mental existence? Extension and resistance are "feelings," "notions," subjective states merely. These combined can but constitute a more complex mental state. This is not an external reality,—it is not the matter which Brown is in search of. But he quietly adds, "to combine these simple notions in something which is not ourselves, and to have the notion of matter, are precisely the same thing." But when and how do we get this "something which is not ourselves," this "something" which is over and above our sensations? This is not explained; it is assumed. But, further, does Brown mean to say, in the face of all his philosophy, that "the feelings"—extension and resistance—can reside in or be the properties of "something

[1] L. XXIV., p. 150.

not ourselves,"—non-mental—not even mind, or a subject of conscious states? A something not ourselves with the feelings extension and resistance; this, forsooth, is matter or external reality,—reality that transcends alike the sphere of sensation and our own bodily organism! This is simply the most contradictory form of Cosmothetic Idealism; and it is Representationalism, if anything is, for the known world of extension and resistance is the counterpart of "the something" that transcends it, seeing that this something is endowed with our very feelings or notions.

But Brown's inference of a cause of resistance in something that is not self, is wholly unwarranted on the premises and by the process here given. (1.) It is supposed to be reached on the principle, assumed to be intuitive, of similar antecedents having similar consequents. When antecedents are similar, consequents are similar; true, but for all this there may be events which have no antecedents at all. If we infer an antecedent at all in the case, it will be in virtue, first of all, of the principle that every event or change in our experience has a cause—a cause of some sort. This principle or necessity is not involved in the principle, that where antecedents are similar, consequents are similar; on the contrary, this latter principle is founded on the other as one at least of its essential elements.

(2.) But if we carry out our inference on the principle of difference of antecedent from difference of consequent, the antecedent inferred will still necessarily be one within our experience, not a something wholly unknown to us, of which we cannot predicate either affirmatively or negatively. I have the feeling of resistance; I know nothing more; I have no right to speak of "some object opposed to me." This is to introduce an object which is not a sensation. But why speak here of an antecedent at all? There is even no antecedent in time here. The feeling of resistance is not, *ex hypothesi*, preceded in my states of consciousness by anything I know, or any state of consciousness. It arises suddenly, unexpectedly, from nothing known to me that has gone before. I have no known antecedent to fall back upon; and as my whole knowledge or consciousness in the matter is limited to antecedents which are states of my own mind, I ought naturally to seek the antecedent among these, not in the wholly new notion of something opposed to me,—some object which is not myself,—an object which transcends alike my experience and my knowledge. If I do reach this notion, I certainly do not get it by the principle of similarity of sequence between antecedents and consequents. And just as little can I reach it by the principle of causality. This principle might tell me there is *a* cause of the feeling of resistance; it could never tell me *what* that cause is, or give to me the new notion of a particular cause. This must be learned from a wholly different source, and is a step entirely subsequent to, as it is beyond the sphere of, the principle of causality.

Further, the external world of popular irresistible belief is a world in space. This is the world which Brown has to establish by his process of inference from the feeling of resistance. But how can the principle of causality do this in any form? A cause of the sensation may be established—but how am I to know that it is a spatial existence? Any form of cause—spiritual or material alike—satisfies the idea of cause. How then can I thus account for this belief in corporeal substance distinct from myself? Obviously, the whole process is a mere fallacy. And if we have this belief which Brown assumes, it never arose in the way he supposes it did. We have no alternative but to retrace our steps, and to admit with Hamilton that we have illegitimately sundered the immediate perception or intuition of the external object from the irresistible belief in it; that, in fact, we believe in an outward world in space because we know an outward world there, and believe that we know it.

But the truth is, that on Brown's principles of the limitation of knowledge to states of consciousness, we could never even suppose this cause of resistance, when suggested to us, to be a non-mental or non-sensational object. We could certainly never suppose it identical with the notion of a material world, separate and separable from ourselves,—a not-self in the ordinary sense of that term. In this case we should naturally think that this unknown cause was a spiritual force, like ourselves—a will like our own. Knowing no causes or antecedents but our volitions or other states of consciousness, we should, if we thought of the cause of a new sensation, such as resistance, think it as different from ourselves but analogically the same. So that instead of reaching the common notion of external material reality, we should regard the surrounding universe as a series of wills or consciousness powerful enough to resist our own.

Nay, we might go even further than this, and show that to Brown such a consciousness is not possible. For supposing the feeling and knowledge of a not-self or external cause of sensation were produced in the mind by this process of inference, what is it on Brown's principles but a state of the mind conscious only of itself as a state? Our knowledge on his principles is limited entirely to the mental state, and its content, whatever it may be, is mental—a part of the state. What advance, then, have we made by reaching the consciousness or feeling of an external cause, beyond this, that we have got merely to another feeling or sensation like that which this is supposed to account for? The feeling of resistance does not bring before us the external reality or thing itself existing, for the external world as more than a state of our own mind we cannot know, but it suggests, or we infer from the feeling, the *notion* of this world. On the ground of this suggested or inferred notion we are led to believe that a reality corresponding to the notion exists in a sphere beyond our consciousness. The world itself as a reality—as a matter of fact—we never can either observe or know. It is merely imaged to us in a notion as a not-self—a corporeal substance—and thus believed in as real,—as a correspondent and counterpart to the notion. This actual world is thus with Brown never known; it is believed to be because of its notion, and in conformity with its notion. Then what is this but a doctrine of Representationalism in the strictest sense of that term—a supposed correspondence between a state of consciousness and what transcends consciousness altogether?—what has never been in consciousness, and never can be, and which accordingly can never be compared with the notion — or known to be truly represented? Between Brown's doctrine and that of Hamilton there thus emerges an absolute contrast. Brown believes in that which he does not, and cannot, apprehend or even know; he believes that he has a notion of it, and a notion conformable to its reality and its character. His belief extends beyond his knowledge, for he believes in an object wholly transcending consciousness. With Hamilton the object is first of all apprehended as a matter of fact—as a fact of our direct experience; and we on the ground of this knowledge believe the thing to exist, or to be real, just as knowing any one of our sensations we believe it to exist, or to be real while we know it, and on the ground of the knowledge. In a word, Hamilton's intuition is a knowledge, Brown's suggestion and inference is a belief—a belief in that which in itself cannot be either apprehended or known.

But there are passages in Brown which are quite inconsistent with the absolute incognoscibility of the real outward world. They, in fact, amount to a doctrine of representative perception, in the proper sense of the term. The sensations or subjective states are excited in us by what is not itself an object of perception. It is yet regarded by us, and believed to be non-mental, material, and spatial. Nay, the feeling of extension is "the direct or immediate result of the presence of the external body with the quality of which it corresponds."[1] "The permanence and universality of the agents which possess the primary qualities." "Our bodily frame is itself extended and resisting."[2] "There

[1] L. XXVI., p. 166. [2] See L. XXVI., p. 165, and *passim*.

is something which is external to ourselves and independent of our transitory feelings,—something which it is impossible for us not to regard as extended and resisting."[1] A doctrine of this sort, besides being inconsistent with the inference of a mere "something" as cause of our sensations, is a doctrine of representation; for through our sensations, as representative *media*, we are alleged to know the essential properties of body,—nay, to know it as what, on the vulgar belief, we think we perceive it to be, material or non-mental,—extended and resisting. It is no longer merely the unknown cause or correlate of sensations.

Hamilton was quite well aware of the connection of the two doctrines of Inferential Realism and Representationalism. He tells us expressly that, in regard to the two latter forms of the hypothesis, in which the representation is a modification of the mind,—one of those attributed to Brown,—"the subaltern theories have been determined by the difficulty to connect the representation with the reality in a relation of causal dependence."[2] And later, in speaking of these subaltern theories, he divides them into those which suppose natural and supernatural causes: "Of these, the natural determination to represent is either (1) one foreign and external (by the action of the material reality on the passive mind, through sense), or (2) one native and internal," &c.[3] The former of these fitly describes Brown's process of inference and suggestion of the unapprehended external world, through the feeling of resistance.

[1] L. XXV., p. 60. [2] *Discussions*, p. 58.
[3] *Reid's Works*, p. 818.

These things being so, Hamilton's criticism of Brown's doctrine is perfectly vindicated. All that need be conceded in the matter is, that Hamilton, while exposing the fallacy of Brown's attempt to reduce space to time and the succession of muscular feelings, did not expressly exhibit the fallacy of his inference of an external reality from the feeling of resistance, and thus did not quite complete the case against him.

CHAPTER VII.

PERCEPTION—NATURAL REALISM AND OBJECTIVE IDEALISM—HAMILTON AND BERKELEY.

As opposed to the doctrine of Natural Realism or Dualism, Hamilton notes the theories of Idealism. According to Idealism, the object of consciousness in perception is ideal—that is, a phænomenon in or of the mind. If the idea be regarded as a mode of the human mind itself, we have Egoistical Idealism. If the idea be viewed not as a mode of the human mind, we have the scheme of non-Egoistical Idealism. If the ideal object be supposed to be in the perceiving mind itself, there is needed the hypothesis, among others, of its infusion by Deity. If this object be not in the mind itself, there is needed the hypothesis of the human mind being conscious of it in a Higher Intelligence, to which it is intimately present. We have, in a word, the hypotheses respectively of Berkeley and Malebranche.

Hamilton regards Berkeley's doctrine as one of objective or non-Egoistical Idealism. The idea or ideal object is not a mere state or mode of the mind; but it is in the perceiving mind, and it is infused into it at the moment of consciousness, immediately by God. The ideal object is thus not a mere mode of the mind. It is a non-Ego, the quality or effect of a non-Ego. This non-Ego is with Berkeley Deity. Hamilton points out the general approximation of thorough-going Realism and thorough-going Idealism :—

"Both build upon the same fundamental fact—that the extended object immediately perceived is identical with the extended object actually existing. For the truth of this both can appeal to the common sense of mankind, and to the common sense of mankind Berkeley did appeal not less confidently and perhaps more logically than Reid. Natural Realism and Absolute Idealism are the only systems worthy of a philosopher; for, as they alone have any foundation in consciousness, so they alone have any consistency in themselves." [1]

Berkeley no doubt held that these ideas in the mind, whether called sensations or perceptions, were on the same level, and were capable of existing out of the individual act of perception, and out of the individual mind altogether,—in other individual minds and out of all human minds. But Berkeley held that they were not capable of existing *per se*,—that is, out of some mind, or any mind. Hence he was led to hold that there is a divine or omnipresent mind, who excites the ideas in or communicates them to individual minds. The *esse* of the idea is *percipi*, but not the *percipi* of the individual act of perception, or of the act of any individual man. This is essential to their (perceived) reality, in our consciousness, but they do not cease to be when our perception or consciousness of them ceases to be. They are constant or permanent apart from our perception.

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 817.

I venture to think that Hamilton admits too much to Berkeley. That the extended thing perceived is the extended thing existing may be true; but I doubt very much whether in Berkeley's sense and in Hamilton's these are the same. The sensation of pleasure or pain—red or green—is also in Berkeley's sense a form of the non-Ego, excited or determined by the omnipresent mind. And this is with Berkeley quite as distinct and independent, in the absence of the intermediary substance matter, as any primary quality. But this is confessedly not on the level of extension or any primary quality. Why, then, should we regard the perception of the extended thing, or the extended thing, as in any other category than the subjective sensation of pleasure or pain? These are all equally excitable or communicable by the Divine Mind, —they are both equally in the mind of the individual. Is their being in the mind or being passing modes of the mind really distinct? Can they ultimately be regarded as something more than modes of consciousness or states of mind, determined equally by a power, which can also determine these in other individuals? Berkeley on this point is vague and unsatisfactory.

Let us take only the primary quality of extension, as in an extended object perceived. The extension or extended thing perceived is separate from the mind, though in it, and permanent (in the Divine Mind). If this be Berkeley's doctrine, it certainly approaches Natural Realism. This too says the extension perceived is in the consciousness, or an object of the consciousness, during the perception. Hamilton adds, it is distinct from and independent of the percipient act. It is real, and there is a Dualism,—two numerically different things,—the conscious percipient, and the extension perceived as existing. The question arises, Does the extension apprehended as distinct and independent of us subsist after the act of perception has passed away? If so, does it subsist exactly as we perceive it, or in some form of potency merely, which is capable of again presenting to us the extension or extended object? I confess I do not find in Hamilton's writings a perfectly explicit answer to these questions. No doubt ordinary common sense says and believes that the extension perceived exists, whether we perceive it or not, exactly as we perceive it. But Hamilton would not, and need not, hold himself bound by an unanalysed dictum of this sort. His appeal to common sense is always under the restriction of the principle of philosophical analysis and criticism. It is sufficient for him to show the essential germ of truth at the root of the popular belief,—to show, in fact, how the conception itself of material reality has arisen. It is clear, I think, that the individual act of perception, as restricted to the now and here of present consciousness, cannot reasonably yield the conclusion that the distinct and independent extension continues to exist, far less exist as we perceive it. This would be to extend our assertion of existence beyond the individual moment, whereas our perception is restricted to that moment. At the same time, we should not be entitled to affirm that the extension perceived ceases to exist, the moment we cease to perceive it. As distinct and independent of our single act of perception, there is no ground for holding it to disappear from reality with that act of perception. The possibility of its subsistence is thus clear. But extension is after all with Hamilton only a quality, not a substance, the quality of a substance corporeal or material,—different from the conscious subject,—a substance of which ultimately, or as it is in itself, we are wholly ignorant. This ultimate reality is probably regarded by Hamilton as something above space and time conditions. And he may fairly be supposed to hold that the world perceived in space and time, is a world subsisting, whether we perceive it or not, with the potency of presenting to us certain qualities. This seems to be implied in his doctrine of Natural Realism, when taken as an explanation of the recurrence of our perceptions, after the numerous breaks or interruptions. When face to face with this question, he says—

"If Berkeley held that the Deity caused one permanent material universe (be it supposed apart or not apart from his own essence), which universe, on coming into relation with our minds, through the medium of our bodily organism, is, in certain of its correlative sides or phases, so to speak, external to our organism, objectively or really perceived (the primary qualities), or determines in us certain subjective affections of which we are conscious (the secondary qualities); in that case I must acknowledge Berkeley's theory to be virtually one of natural realism, the differences being only verbal. But again, if Berkeley held that the Deity caused no permanent material universe to exist, and to act uniformly as one, but does Himself either infuse into our several minds the phænomena (ideas) perceived and affective, or determines our several minds to elicit within consciousness such apprehended qualities or felt affections; in that case I can recognise in Berkeley's theory only a scheme of theistic idealism—in fact, only a scheme of perpetual and universal miracle, against which the law of parcimony is conclusive, if the Divine interposition be not proved necessary to render possible the facts." [1]

Here, clearly, Hamilton points to a material universe created, to its priority to perception, to the perception of certain of its qualities (the primary) as objective or real, to their correlation with our organism, and the permanency of this material world and of these qualities amid our interrupted perceptions. This subsists as the subject of the quality perceived, and as the cause of subjective affections and sensations in us. In this way Hamilton's doctrine of Natural Realism is broadly distinguished from Berkeley's doctrine of even the immediate perception of the primary qualities, as dependent on the constantly repeated causality of the Divine Mind. Even if Hamilton merely contended for an intermediate world of force, subsisting by itself in space and time, this would differentiate his doctrine from that of Berkeley, and it would be sufficient for a doctrine of Realism. For, according to Berkeley, the *esse* of sensible reality is *percipi*, and no quality of matter, or material substance even, can exist simply or *per se*—that is, as unperceived by some mind. The assumption, however, of the absolute convertibility of *esse* and *percipi* is not competent on Hamilton's allegation of the perceived distinctness or independence, involving externality, of the primary quality. It is always thus possible that the quality may have an existence in space and time, apart from individual perception; and this existence may be either of the quality as perceived, or of the quality in the form of a material power, capable of presenting it to the percipient. And at the utmost, Berkeley can identify the

[1] *Memoir*, pp. 346, 347.

esse of sensible reality with the *percipi* only on the unwarranted assumption that *our percipi* limits the existence of the quality perceived to *a percipi*. This he cannot prove without assuming that the percipient act and the quality perceived are not numerically distinct or independent in the moment of perception, and this is the very point at issue. It does not follow that, because we only apprehend a quality or fact in a definite act at a given moment, such quality or fact ceases to be the moment our apprehension ceases, unless it pass into some other percipient mind. The true inference is, that our perception ceasing, we cannot say anything about the perceived object, or the conditions of its existence, apart from our perception; and if its distinctness from us as a fact be apprehended, along with its reality in the perception, the presumption rather is that its *esse* is not simply *percipi*—that, for aught we know, it may truly subsist, all perception ceasing or being interrupted. Being may transcend all being known by us: we cannot at least affirm that it does not, on the ground simply that we know something, and some being.

But it should be kept in mind that Realism or Dualism does not require that the object perceived, in the form of the primary quality, should subsist after our perception, or amid our interrupted perceptions, exactly as we perceive it. All that is logically required is that, on the ground of the perceived quality, as distinctly non-spiritual or material, there is a substance, matter or force, or both conjoined in one, intermediate between the percipient and the divine action, which is capable of exhibiting the known material qualities, and is the ground of this world perceived in space and time. Material existence *per se*, or apart from perception, not being impossible, the positive proof of the permanence of the material world in space and time will be found in the known difference between material and spiritual qualities in our experience, and the uniformity with which the former recur to our apprehension, in a manner impersonal and apart from our volition. Order, regularity, law, in our perceptions, do not necessarily point to such an immediate action of the divine mind, in the presentations of sense, as is implied in Berkeleyanism. The Deity does not need "to perform a petty miracle on each representation of each several mind." There is no need for a doctrine of omnipresent creation; the cosmos of things may have been constituted in one great act, and its grand order permanently established. The ultimate reference of order and uniformity to God does not destroy the possibility of the impress of these by Him on an intermediate world of matter and force in a single moment, and it may be for all time. In this case the material contents of space and time would be phænomenal of matter and force, and of mind as well, in their regulated orders of succession and coexistence. A world of force, subordinated to law, with its qualities changing from potential to actual—through growth, decay, and transmutation—yet unchanging to our conception in its definite order, would remain the permanent amid our passing yet corresponding perceptions; a world real now, real ere my individual life was, real to the individualities around me, and subsisting when "I," and "thou," and "they," after the transmutation of our organic being, are garnered in the chaotic dust out of which the wonderful forms of life and beauty continue to arise.

The Berkeleyan theory is weak and insufficient. (1.) It takes no proper account, makes no adequate analysis, of the facts of sensation and perception. To describe our knowledge of the outward world indiscriminately by the terms *sensation*, *idea*, *perception*, &c., is to speak vaguely. Is the mere subjective affection of our sensible pleasure or pain identified with the intuition of extension or resistance to muscular and locomotive effort? Then is the sensation taken wholly out of its place, and ranked as different and more than what it is. Is this latter intuition classed with the sensation? Then is the act lowered to what it is not, mutilated and distorted. Are sensation and perception treated as generically the same, simply because they are supposed to relate to sensible reality, and involve a percipient subject? Then the whole question of intuitive Realism is slurred over. How can Berkeley, or any one else, settle the question of the meaning of material reality, unless by an accurate scientific analysis of that which we intuitively perceive? Hamilton's appeal to intuitive knowledge must be honestly faced, ere any statement can be made regarding the meaning of material existence. How such a notion even arises in consciousness, as matter of debate, must be explained. And if externality and materiality, in the proper sense of these terms, cannot be accounted for, the causes of the illusion must also be legitimately explained.

The use of the term *idea* to describe the fact of sense-perception is ambiguous. The subject *plus* consciousness of the object, is the idea. What, then, is meant by the object? Is it a sensation merely,—a subjective state or property; or is it a percept, a quality of a non-Ego? The whole point of the difference lies here. We may speak of *ideas* and *sensations* and *sense-given phænomena*, but until we realise this distinction and face it, our work is of no avail. Berkeley summed up his doctrine in two propositions. The one proposition he regards as that of the common sense of mankind, the other that of the philosophers. The truth of his system is their conciliation. "The vulgar," he says, "are of opinion that these things they immediately perceive are the real things." Philosophers are of opinion "that the things immediately perceived are ideas which exist only in the mind."[1] Mankind not only believe that the things they immediately perceive are the real things, but that they are independent of the act of perception, and in this sense perfectly real. This doctrine is utterly incompatible with the identification of sensible things with "ideas which exist only in the mind," whether "the mind" be regarded as "the mind" of all finite percipients, or as only the Divine Mind, or as both the Divine and finite minds. It is of no consequence that these ideas are independent of the will of the percipient, and therefore of his personality. So are dreams in a great measure; and so are essentially the laws of association. Their *esse* is still simply *percipi;* they are wholly subjective, and do not subsist except as the acts of the percipient, or independently of these acts. As Ueberweg has well said, hitting the blot here—

"The first proposition (that which the ordinary mind cor-

[1] *Third Dialogue*, vol. i. p. 359. The reference is to Professor Fraser's admirable edition of Berkeley.

rectly affirms) is, that the real table, and all real unthinking objects generally, are the table and the objects which we see and feel. The second (or scientific one) is, that what we see and feel consists entirely of phænomena—*i. e.*, of certain qualities, such as hardness, weight, shape, magnitude, *which inhere in our sensations, and consequently that what we see and feel is nothing but sensation.* From the combination of these two propositions, it follows that real objects are phænomena of the kind just mentioned, and that consequently there exists in the world nothing besides these objects, whose *esse* is *percipi*, and the percipient subjects. But 'what we see and feel' is ambiguous. If by this expression we understand *our sensuous perceptions themselves*, then the second proposition is true, but the first not. If, on the contrary, we understand by it the transcendental objects (or things in themselves) which so act upon our senses, that in consequence of this action perceptions arise in us, then the first proposition is true, but the second false; and it is only by a change of meaning that both are true, whence the syllogism is faulty on account of a *quaternio terminorum.* Our sensations depend upon a previous affection of the organs of sensation, and this affection depends on the existence of intrinsically real external objects." [1]

(2.) The notion of outness or externality is misconceived, and it is erroneously identified with that of distance. Externality is supposed to mean either externality to our present sense-experience in our past sense-experience now no longer actual, or in our future sense-experience not yet actual, or externality to our own personal experience altogether in the sense-experience of other minds, present, past, and future. Such externality is inadequate even to the proper extension of the term. This is not necessarily more than externality in time; it is the difference in the first case

[1] *History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. p. 89.

simply of the present from the past or future in sense-experience. This need mean nothing more than the difference in a succession of feelings. In the second place, there is no externality at all, if the other person be with us contemporaneous, for the same time cannot be external to itself; and if the other person be past or future, there is nothing but the difference of the notion of myself from the notions of other selves; that is, either no externality at all, or an externality common to different notions. But externality is not limited to a difference in succession merely. There is also an externality of coexistence in the same time. One point in a succession in the course of time may be external to another, even if the first point perishes at once, and the other succeeds, equally perishing. But an externality of coexistence is impossible, unless the two points subsist, and subsist in the same time. And this is the true externality; that of sensible reality or of the world of sense-experience. Succession does not necessarily give this, nor does it imply succession at all; for in the one moment of time I may apprehend the coexistence. This consideration, moreover, is fatal to the whole attempted genesis of space out of time. There is presupposition of the point at issue.

Further, outness or externality is not identical with distance in space. Outness is implied in simple contact of the hand with an extra-organic body, although there be no appreciable distance between them, as indeed it is implied in one colour alongside another, where no line of demarcation is sensibly discernible. Distance means degree of outness of one thing from another; but it presupposes outness as a fact and a conception. Externality is given in any form of contact, in any form of locomotive effort, and is the essential condition of our even conceiving its varying degrees,—that is, distance in a linear relation to the bodily organism.

Further, what is there more or less unintelligible in the externality of the unthinking object to the organ of sense, than there is in the externality of the thinking finite subject to me, the thinking finite subject? Can I not form an equally adequate or an equally inadequate conception of each? Is even the continued subsistence of space, *per se*, less intelligible than the continued subsistence of Deity *per se?*

(3.) The Berkeleyan explanation of the permanence of material reality or sensible things is wholly inadequate. It is admitted or contended for as an interpretation of Berkeley, that sensible things, visible or tangible, do not pass out of reality when they cease to be seen or touched by me, or even by all individual human beings. Our perceptions of them are intermittent, but sensible things are permanent. They are thus independent of our perceptions. The material world, as geology teaches, has existed thousands of years before men and sentient beings. The sensible objects around us do not pass out of being when we cease to perceive them. How is this so, and in what sense is it so? In the state of present sensation, or perception, the actual knowledge is always only of a limited kind. In the vision, for example, of a tree, what we apprehend by sight is not the whole of what is, or of what we should apprehend if we were to apply to the tree the sense of touch and muscular effort. These would give us more and other actual sensations (perceptions) than we have by sight alone. Still looking at the tree,—experiencing the sensation of vision,—we believe that the actual sensations of touch in connection with it are possible, and that they would be actually experienced if we were to touch the tree. The actual visual sensations are thus signs of other conceivable but as yet non-actual sensations. This connection has been established by association,—by, in fact, a sort of induction. The existence of a "sensible thing" thus implies all that can be found in the actual sensation, and in the guarantee, objective and universal, which this gives us of conceivable sensations which we may experience. It is added that the most distinct and easily imaginable objective reality is found in the association between what is seen and what is felt,—between Sight and Touch.

The main point to be noted here is, that supposing the principle sufficient to account for the permanence and independence of sensible things, it is odd that it should not give us this conviction, in an identical sense, in regard to every connection of our sensations (or perceptions). Why, for example, does not the association of a taste with a smell, or a taste with a sound, or a sound with the feeling of pressure or contact, not give us this conception and conviction of the permanent possibility of the smell to come, or the sound to come, or the feeling of contact to come, in the same sense as of the extension or force? We expect, for example, when we smell an orange, that the taste associated with the former orange is now capable of becoming an actual sensation; while the same association leads us to expect that if the touch were applied to the visible orange we should find resistance, extension, and solidity. But do we therefore believe that the taste was permanent and independent in the same sense in which the extension was permanent and independent of our perceptions? Surely there is all the difference in the world between the permanence or independence of tangible extension and that of the mere feeling of contact, the sensation of taste, of pleasure or pain. In the latter cases we know that the actual sensation ceases to be the moment it passes out of consciousness. Do we mean to say that because of its association with some other sensation, it nevertheless continues to be after it ceases to be felt, in the same sense in which extension once perceived, or force once resisted, continues to be after our consciousness of each has passed away? There is little wonder that the objective reality in the case of the associations of sight and touch is clear and distinct, seeing that the object of perception is in its nature so thoroughly different from that in the other senses. And this lays bare the whole fallacy of this method of explaining the independence and permanence of sensible reality. The association itself of past and present sensations, and of percepts, requires explanation. They have been connected in our experience, and they have recurred in a uniform way, ere we begin to expect and believe that they will so recur again. This is an independence of us, and a permanence, already given, presupposed. It is this which generates the association with its consequent expectancy and belief in a future permanence. But surely if such a permanence and independence be already presupposed, the association generated out of it cannot explain this independence and permanence. This is simply a case of *ὕστερον πρότερον*. Whatever may be *the cause of our* belief in and expectation of the permanence and independence of the sensible world, it is not given in this petitory theory

The essential point in Natural Realism is, that whatever be the object immediately apprehended, be it bodily extension, be it resistance of inertia, of muscle, or fibre to volition, or to the organic effort to move, this is not a mere mode of the conscious mind or conscious agent. This relation is not represented by that of substance and attribute. The extension I perceive, be it bodily even, is not a quality of the Ego; the resistance I apprehend in locomotion, though it cause a sensation which is mine, is not a sensation which is mine, but something in contact with a wholly different set of nerves, the locomotive, as opposed to the mere nerves of pressure and sensibility. "All muscular contraction is dependent on the agency of one set of nerves, all feeling of muscular contraction on another." [1] In perception, then, the quality perceived is not related to me as a mere feeling, or sensation, or emotion is, a passing state of my sensibility. It is the quality of a non-Ego, the revelation of what is, but is not me. It cannot be said to be created by me, and I am not entitled to say that it ceases to be merely because I cease to perceive it. Dogmatism on this point is precluded; and there being recurrence or uniformity in the percepts, the probability is on the side of a permanent non-Ego in one form or another. The mental volition I put forth is a mode of me, the one permanent willing agent; but the extension which I apprehend, the resistance which I meet with, these are not mine in the same sense, and can never be proved to be so. This is all that Natural Realism or Dualism needs to contend for.

[1] *Reid's Works*, p. 865.

CHAPTER VIII.

PHÆNOMENAL PSYCHOLOGY—GENERAL POINTS.

THERE are several salient points under Phænomenal Psychology which, though not of equal prominence and importance in the philosophy of Hamilton with those already discussed, would yet fall to be noticed in an adequate exposition of his contributions to the science of mind. These I can barely indicate, owing to the limits of this volume.

(1.) There is the law regulating Perception and Sensation. This is:—that, above a certain point, the stronger the Sensation, the weaker the Perception; and the distincter the Perception, the less obtrusive the Sensation. Looking at the different senses, it is found that precisely as a sense has more of the one element, it has less of the other. In Sight and Hearing, knowledge or perception predominates; in Taste and Smell, sensation prevails. There are, in other words, qualities of a non-Ego apprehended or known principally in the former; in the latter there is the experience of the subjective states of pleasure or pain.

Looking to the impressions of the same sense, these differ in degree and in quality or kind. Above a certain limit, if the impression be strong, as in sight, we are dazzled and blinded, and consciousness is limited to the pain or pleasure of the sensation. Perception is virtually lost in the glare. Looking to the difference in kind, and selecting colour and figure in sight, in the former there is more of sensation, in the latter more of perception. In colour there are fewer differences and relations than in figure, but a much higher sensuous enjoyment. In the apprehension of figure, its varieties and relations, the accompanying pleasure is more refined and permanent. In painting there is pleasure from vivid and harmonious colouring, and pleasure from the drawing and grouping of the figures. The gratification we feel in the colouring is, as more sensuous, less refined and lasting than that which we derive from the harmonious relations of the figure. As a rule, the pleasure of sensation is more intense but less refined and enduring than that arising from perception, allied as it is to intellectual energy.

(2.) Under the heads of Memory and Imagination there are the conditions of knowledge out of consciousness,—already generally referred to under mental latency.[1] And there is the view of the organ of Imagination as being the original sense excited from within. There are cases of persons who, having lost their sight, are no longer capable of representing the images of visible objects. In these instances it is found that disorganisation has not only affected the eye, but extended to the optic nerves and thalami,—those parts of the brain which constitute the internal instrument of the sense. Had the eye alone been destroyed,

[1] See above, p. 98.

while optic nerve and thalami, the real organ of vision, remained unimpaired, the imagination of forms and colours would have continued quite vigorous. Similar cases are recorded in regard to the deaf. Even voluntary motions are imitated in and by the imagination. In representing speech, the movement of the countenance, and the limbs, there is a kind of tension in the same nerves through which, by an act of will, I can determine an overt and voluntary motion of the muscles. When imagination is very lively, this outward movement actually takes place. It is thus more than probable that there are as many organs of Imagination as of Sense.

There is (3) the theory of the Laws of Association, at which Hamilton worked for long, without completing it, yet leaving very valuable results. The points here of especial note are his final reduction of those laws to two, instead of one, as in the Lectures—viz., Repetition or Direct Remembrance, according to which "thoughts coidentical in modification, but differing in time, suggest each other;" and Redintegration or Reminiscence, according to which "thoughts once coidentical in time are, however different as mental modes, again suggestive of each other, and that in the mutual order which they originally held." From the combination of these laws arise the special ones of Similarity, Contrast, and Coadjacency.

Similarity depends on Repetition, for resembling objects being to us identical in their resembling points, must call up each other. Redintegration then comes into play. They now form parts of the same mental whole.

Contrast connects itself with Repetition and Redintegration, because all contrast is of things contained under a common notion,—qualities contrasted are thus to a certain degree similar. The opposite sides of contrast make up a common whole.

Coadjacency embraces thoughts related to each other, as Cause and Effect, Substance and Attribute, &c., and are thus mutually suggestive.

(3.) Under the head of Comparison there is the theory of General Notions or Concepts.

The concept is the point of view under which we recognise a plurality of objects as a unity. It is a notion of resemblance, and thus implies relation. Objects are grouped as *men*, *rivers*, *mountains*, because of resembling qualities apprehended. The relation of resemblance we cannot depict in Imagination, but we can form an individual image of *man*, *river*, or *mountain*, and consider it as representing, though inadequately, the other objects of the class. A concept *per se* is unimaginable, even unthinkable, but it can be realised in and through the image of an individual of the class whose attribute or attributes it contains. An abstract concept is a mere potentiality in knowledge,—that which is capable of being definitely realised in an image; an actual concept is an image *plus* the knowledge of relation to other resembling objects, real or possible. The ancient problem of Nominalism and Conceptualism is thus solved. It is impossible to form a notion of the class—say, *man*—corresponding to the universality of the class itself, as has been maintained by conceptualists,—ultra-conceptualists. For in this case our one notion or representation would be of *white* and *black*, *tall* and *short*, *fat* and *thin* men, of contrary, even contradictory, qualities. Our picture or actual image must be of some one of the class, but through the resemblance known by the understanding this one image is representative of all the other objects of the class. There is more here, however, than the Ultra-Nominalist doctrine that the community or generality lies in the name alone. It lies in the image constituted into a representation.

The ground of this theory is to be found in the distinction of the two sides of the concept,—Comprehension and Extension,—a distinction first introduced into philosophical literature in these times by Hamilton. Every notion has or means an attribute or attributes. *Man* means *living*, *sentient*, *reasoning*, *responsible*. This is the content or comprehension. Every notion has or means objects, real or possible, in which the attribute or attributes inhere, or to which they belong. Man means *black man*, *white man*, *copper-coloured man*. This is the compass or extension. To put Hamilton's doctrine precisely, we should say that we cannot realise any part of the comprehension of the notion without embodying it, the common attribute or attributes, in an individual image. In no one act, therefore, can we realise all the class—that is, all the objects of the class; but in one act we can realise what is essential to each, applicable to, and thus representative of all, actual or possible.

Hamilton further holds that Comprehension and Extension in notions are regulated by the law,—the greater the extension, the less the comprehension, and *vice versâ*. When I predicate *existence* of an object, I say the least that is possible of it. Comprehension is at its minimum,—there is the least number of qualities. When I predicate *Alexander* of the individual, I say the most that is possible of him,—here comprehension is at its maximum. There is the greatest sum of qualities or attributes. And in the former case, extension is at its maximum, for existence takes in every class of objects. In the latter case, extension is at its minimum, for it includes but one object.

Out of this distinction arise two kinds of Judgments. We have the comprehensive judgment, when our predicate is an attribute,—as *the river runs.* We have the extensive judgment, when our predicate is a class or object-group, as *plant is organised.* Hamilton carries out this distinction to Reasoning, and makes two distinct but convertible kinds of syllogism,—the comprehensive and the extensive.

(4.) Under the psychology of the Feelings, there is his theory of the laws of Pleasure and Pain, founded mainly on the Aristotelic doctrine of pleasure as the result of free and full, and pain of impeded or over-strained, energy. This admits of most important applications in Æsthetics, in Morals, and in practical life. He has himself applied it to the emotions accompanying imagination in combination with the understanding — viz., the Beautiful, the Sublime, the Picturesque.

In the case of the Beautiful, the imagination and understanding act together; and each faculty readily accomplishes its function. Variety or complexity of parts is supposed; these it is for the imagination to hold up or represent, while it is the part of the understanding to make of them a whole. When an object is so constituted as readily to allow imagination and understanding, working together, to reach the conception of the unity of the object,—the feeling of the beautiful arises. A beautiful thing is thus one whose form occupies the imagination and understanding in a free and full, and, consequently, in an agreeable activity.

The feeling of the Sublime, on the other hand, is a mingled one of pleasure and pain—of pleasure in the consciousness of strong energy, of pain in the consciousness that this energy is vain. We try, for example, to bring the immensity of space under an image; we try, at the same time, to measure it by other quantities. We have the same experience in dealing with transcendent Power. But we fail; imagination and understanding are baffled, and we desist,—fall back into repose. There is the pleasure of the full energy, in the first instance, the pain of its continuance as forced and impeded; and there is the pleasure of the contrast in the state of repose. Hence the sublime at once attracts and repels.

The feeling of the Picturesque, again, is in contrast to both the Beautiful and the Sublime. The object is varied, and abrupt in its variety: it is regularly irregular. We thus do not even seek to reduce it to harmony. It is thus neither beautiful nor sublime; but the mind is content to linger over its details, and thus get such pleasure as each part may afford. It was the harmony of the whole which was sought by classical art; it is too often the pleasure of detail, of point or episode, which modern works yield or seek to give.

(5.) Under the head of the Conations—Desire and Will—the important point is his doctrine of Free-Will as a psychological fact. Hamilton holds will to be a free cause—that is, a cause which is not also an effect,—an absolute or unconditioned cause. This he regards as established, on the ground of the direct testimony of consciousness, and indirectly as an implicate in our consciousness of duty and responsibility. He holds, at the same time, that free-will, as an absolute cause or commencement in time, is inconceivable. Morally, however, a will determined by motive excludes responsibility; while a motiveless volition is worthless. It is, therefore, impossible for us to conceive the possibility of moral liberty, either in man or in God; and yet the fact is not to be held as disproved on the ground of this incomprehensibility—this impossibility of conceiving the *how* of the fact. Here his special theory of the judgment of Causality, as the result of an impotence to conceive an absolute commencement in the universe, comes into application. It is only an incapacity of thinking an absolute commencement, not a positive deliverance or positive necessity of intelligence. This purely negative judgment cannot be held as counterbalancing the unconditional testimony of consciousness. Free-will is not impossible in fact, because of the judgment of Causality,—for virtually this is not a law of fact or things. It is grounded on a mere mental impotence to conceive an absolute commencement. But finally, he urges, that while free-will supposes as a fact an unthinkable absolute beginning in time, necessitarianism supposes as a fact the equally unthinkable alternative of an infinite non-commencement. As speculative schemes, the two theories are thus equally balanced. The very objection of incomprehensibility directed by the necessitarian against the upholder of free-will is equally valid against himself. Mere speculative thought is unable to decide between the two alternatives. We are left here, as we are on all ultimate questions of philosophy, to experience,—to consciousness—to the light of its facts and analogies. The consciousness of moral law, as implying moral liberty in man, gives a decisive preponderance to the doctrine of freedom over fate.[1]

[1] Cf. *Discussions*, pp. 623-625; *Metaphysics*, L. II.; *Reid's Works*, pp. 616, 617, p. 624, note.

CHAPTER IX.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE LAWS OF KNOWLEDGE—NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE THOUGHT—RELATIVITY.

SUPPOSING it admitted that a certain complement of cognitions must be allowed as having their origin in the nature of the thinking principle itself, the question arises as to what are ultimate and elementary, and what are to be regarded as modifications or combinations of these. The reduction of our native cognitions to system still remains to be solved. The most ingenious of the attempts, that of Kant, is neither a necessary deduction, nor a natural arrangement of our native cognitions. The truth is that philosophers have not yet established the principles on which the solution of this problem ought to be undertaken.[1] The classification of the conditions of knowledge which Hamilton now gives is in the line of completing the Nomology of Consciousness or of knowledge in general. In the analysis of the Conditions of the Thinkable about to be referred to, Hamilton goes deeper than he did in the analysis of the conditions of Consciousness. For in these, while he refers to object as such, he does not analyse it precisely;

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. XXXVIII.

whereas in the latter exposition, his main aim is to state the conditions, logical and metaphysical, of an object of thought—indeed of knowledge as such, or in general. He seeks to lay down the ultimate conditions at once of possibility and impossibility in our knowledge.

In the scheme which Hamilton terms the "more matured" form of his analysis and classification of the conditions of the thinkable,[1] the first point is the distinction of thought—that is, knowledge in its most general form—into Negative and Positive. Negative thought emerges when existence is not attributed to an object. By existence, however, Hamilton obviously means existence subjective or objective—either ideal or real—that is, either possible or actual existence in the object of thought. Every object which we can positively think as possible has existence attributed to it—that is, ideal existence or existence as an object of thought, and, therefore, of possible reality. Every object thought or known as real, is thus also by implication first, as it were, thought as possible. Negative thought is not, however, the absence of mental activity. It asserts what is unthinkable. The mind tries to think the irrelative or the contradictory, and fails. We contrast the relative and conceivable, which we positively think, with their opposites. We only know, indeed, what non-existence means, by reference to the existence which we know. Hence, in negative thought there is mental effort or activity; there is the consciousness of its contrast with the conceived and conceivable.

But negative thought is of two kinds, and is determined by two different sets of conditions. First, we may

[1] *Discussions*, p. 602.

try to think the contradictory,—to unite in one indivisible act of thought two contradictory attributes. In this case, the result of the effort is nothing or zero. This is "the really impossible"—the *nihil purum*—mere nothing—the impossible, not only in thought but in reality.

This condition, then, of thought and knowledge, being presupposed as not violated—having got in truth the not-impossible — we come to that second condition, or set of conditions, which makes positive thought for us. This is existence thought as relative or conditioned—thought under relation. It is only when we clothe the object of thought in relation,—in relation to the self, or to other objects,—that we have a positive object of thought or knowledge at all. This, in its most simple or abstract form, is *something*—some thing or being. Lower than this thought cannot go. It is the ultimate in knowledge; only now do we think at all,—only now do we apprehend or know.

Let us look, then, at the first-named conditions.

These laws—Identity, Non-Contradiction, Excluded Middle—are common phases of one great law. The first involves all the others. The moment a thing or quality is apprehended or thought, it is so apprehended or thought. The law thus necessarily comes into play. Affirmation or determination is impossible without presupposing that A is A. The object, thus determined, by the affirmation of a certain character or quality, cannot be thought the same when this quality is denied of it. Assertions regarding a thing are mutually contradictory when the one says that the thing possesses the character which the other says it does not at one and the same time. The contradictory is unthinkable. A = not A = 0. This is the principle of all logical negation.

The law of Excluded Middle between Contradictories asserts that, of two repugnant notions, both of which cannot be in the same subject, we must yet think the one or the other as being in that subject. A either is or is not. The alternatives under identity and non-contradiction are alone possible; of these one or other is necessary. The violation of any of these laws renders the process of thought suicidal, or absolutely null.

It should here be observed, that while Hamilton holds a contradictory concept or judgment to be null as an object of thought, he does not hold that it is incapable of being understood in the sense and to the extent that we may know full well the meaning of each term, taken separately. We understand thus what is proposed by an attempt at their mental combination. But we cannot

> "unite the terms in a mental [concept or] judgment, though they stand united in a verbal proposition. If we attempt this, the two mutually exclusive terms not only cannot be thought as one, but in fact annihilate each other; and thus the result, in place of a positive judgment, is a negation of thought."[1]

Attention to this somewhat obvious distinction might have saved a great deal of criticism of a superficially acute kind; as, for example, that the contradictory and the inconceivable must be conceived in order to be pronounced such.

These things premised, it is easy to see how the philosophy of Hamilton regarding the very possibility of an object of knowledge in any form, be it intuitional

[1] *Logic*, L. VI.; *Reid's Works*, pp. 378, 379.

or conceptual, confronts philosophies of the so-called Absolute in knowledge. He charges the Absolutists in general, meaning Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, with proceeding on a subversion of all logical truth. Apart from the condition of Relativity, Hamilton would disallow Hegel's position both as to ground and method. By very different and contradictory methods the thinkers of this class arrive at the same end, but their systems all agree in being at variance with the logical laws.[1]

Hamilton's general charge against those who deny the universal application of the three laws in question is, that this implies the subversion of the reality of thought, —in fact, of knowledge in any form; and as this subversion is itself an act of thought, it annihilates itself. What you have left when you have denied, or seemed to deny, the principles of Identity, Non-contradiction, Excluded Middle, and yet assert knowledge is really nothing. You may baptise it in words if you choose, but you cannot realise it in any form of concept. There is a verbal object, but no object of thought; there is a verbal proposition, but no mental judgment. To allege a thought or judgment in such circumstances is to subvert even its possibility. If A existing and A not existing are at once true, there is no agreement or disagreement between thought and its objects. Truth and falsehood are merely empty sounds. We think only by affirmation and negation; these are only as they are exclusive of each other. Unless, therefore, existence and non-existence be opposed objectively, as these are subjectively, all thought, all truth, is mere illusion.[2]

It might be added that if the identity of contradic-

[1] *Logic*, L. VI. [2] *Logic*, L. VI.; cf. L. V.

tories be alleged, the allegation, as no more true than its contradictory, is at once paralysed. If it be alleged that this identity may hold in the sphere of the relative or finite,—in that of the Understanding, but not in that of the so-called Reason or Pure thought, which cognises the Absolute,—then there are two wholly contradictory spheres of knowledge; and we should need a higher Reason and still purer thought to tell us which is the true, or how these are to be reconciled. A dualism of the very worst sort would still remain unreconciled and unreconcilable.

Further, it is easily shown that Hegel's pretentious attempt to apply the law of contradiction to Pure Being, as the basis of his logic, implies a violation of the very condition under which any one of those laws of thought can be applied. There is no identity unless it be of a definite quality or sum of qualities, or a definite object perceived or thought. The very conception of identity implies something to be identified with itself at least. It implies an A to begin with, and the very possibility of contradiction implies the same definitude. We cannot speak of Not A, unless we have already an A or object given. And as Pure Being is, without qualities, utterly undetermined, it is neither identical with itself, nor can anything be predicated as different from it. It is not an A, of which a Not A can even be said. So that Hegel's law of immanent evolution, through being, non-being, becoming, is as empty and impotent a formula as could be laid down. It is wholly hypothetical, and can never get under way without postulating that definite reality and those laws which it is proposing to construct. The verbalism of "synthetic thought" is a mere covering of the *petitio principii* involved. There is no synthesis, there is no progress, for the simple reason that there is no beginning in pure being or pure thought.

Hamilton, speaking of Schelling and Hegel, says:—

"Both stuck to the Absolute, but each regarded the way in which the other professed to reach it as absurd. Hegel derided the Intellectual Intuition of Schelling as a poetical play of fancy; Schelling derided the Dialectic of Hegel as a logical play with words. Both, I conceive, were right; but neither fully right. If Schelling's Intellectual Intuition were poetical, it was a poetry transcending, in fact abolishing, human imagination. If Hegel's Dialectic were logical, it was a logic outraging that science and the conditions of thought itself. Hegel's whole philosophy is indeed founded on two errors—on a mistake in logic, and on a violation of logic. In his dream of disproving the law of Excluded Middle (between two Contradictories), he inconceivably mistakes Contraries for Contradictories; and in positing pure or absolute existence as a mental datum, immediate, intuitive, and above proof (though, in truth, this be palpably a mere relative gained by a process of abstraction), he not only mistakes the fact, but violates the logical law, which prohibits us to assume the principle which it behoves us to prove. On these two fundamental errors rests Hegel's Dialectic; and Hegel's Dialectic is the ladder by which he attempts to scale the Absolute."[1]

There is no doubt that this confusion of contrary and contradictory opposition runs all through the Hegelian dialectic, and vitiates it fundamentally. It is essential to the dialectic as a progressive movement that the opposite in each case should be a positive. But so far as contradictory negation is concerned, there is no posi-

[1] *Discussions*, p. 24—note added.

tive—mere negation satisfies it,—the pure abolition of the subject. Through this no movement is possible. There is simple paralysis. Synthesis is a dream. *None* abolishes *one*, but does not add to it.

If the negation be contrary, this, in the first place, supposes a concept or class notion already constituted with sub-classes,—supposes already a process of experience, thought, and the laws of thought which are sought to be subverted. In the second place, even the contrary negation does not give a definite or single positive, but only one out of a number of possible positives or opposites. And the whole idea of proceeding to construct knowledge by negation,—whether the forms of knowledge merely, or the matter of knowledge, or both,—is a mere imagination. But further, Hamilton's view of thought as itself cognitive of existence in this or that determinate mode,—quality, in fact, and its relations,—and as such grounded on intuition, is fatal to the whole Hegelian hypothesis of Pure Being as an apprehensible or knowable object at all. To the term *Ens, or existence in general—Being, Thing,* &c.—there corresponds no conception, no positive notion. We have no knowledge in apprehension or perception of being in general, or pure being. There is no object of experience, in short, which corresponds to these terms. There is no knowledge of the universal *per se*. All that we apprehend is the individual, definite, determinate,—something known as this, not that. Being is known in the individual or determinate thing, but never *per se*. To lay down this so-called notion as a starting-point for the evolution of a philosophical system is vain.

Hamilton proceeds to develop his theory of the Conditions of the Thinkable beyond what may be called the formal point—viz., the bare or formal possibility of any object of thought or knowledge at all. Relativity is the second great condition, or name for a new series of conditions. The violation of the formal laws of thinking precludes the possibility of thinking anything whatever. Their fulfilment is thus a negative condition for positive thought. But the condition of Relativity must also be fulfilled ere even something can be thought or known. And here we are told that

"the condition of Relativity, in so far as it is *necessary*, is brought to bear under two principal relations; the one springing from the *subject* of knowledge—the mind thinking (*the relation of knowledge*); the other, which is subdivided, from the *object* of knowledge—the thing thought about (*the relations of Existence*). . . . The relation of Knowledge is that which arises from the reciprocal dependence of the subject and object of thought, Subjective and Objective, including *Self and not-Self*, or *Ego and non-Ego*. Whatever comes into consciousness is thought by us either as belonging to the mental self exclusively (subjectivo-subjective), or as belonging to the not-self exclusively (subjectivo-objective), or as belonging partly to both (subjectivo-objective)." [1]

Hamilton's doctrine of Relativity has thus a twofold aspect. It refers, on the one hand, to the conditions under which the object of knowledge exists; and it refers, on the other, to the conditions under which the object of existence is known.

The two meanings of the word *condition* which run through all the philosophy of Hamilton come out in these statements. (1.) The necessary relation of the subject to the object and of the object to the subject is the

[1] *Discussions*, ibid., p. 604; cf. p. 14.

condition—the essential condition—of the knowledge of each; and as this relation is supposed in all our thought, it is a universal condition of our thought. Thought thus obeys conditions. "Conditional limitation is the fundamental law of the possibility of thought." Each term, subject, or object, is simply the condition of the thought of the other. (2.) Apart from the law or limit to knowledge of the relation of subject and object, what we know of either or of anything is a mode, quality, or state. This is properly called a *condition*, or mode, of being of the subject. It answers, in fact, to the determinate modes of existence, already spoken of as the matter of positive thought. The special modes of existence are the special conditions under which it is known and knowable by us. "To think is thus to condition," because it is to know this or that object, and this or that object in a particular mode or condition. To condition is thus identical with determining, or thinking in the form of determinate being.[1]

This twofold aspect of relativity as put by Hamilton has been entirely misconceived by Mill and others. Mill, indeed, recognises what may be regarded as one phase of objective relativity—viz.,

"that we only know anything by knowing it as distinguished from something else; that all consciousness is of difference; that two objects are the smallest number required to constitute consciousness; that a thing is only seen to be what it is by contrast with what it is not. It is not in this sense," he adds, "that the phrase—relativity of knowledge—is ordinarily or intentionally used by Sir W. Hamilton."[2]

Mill is as far wrong in referring this law to Hobbes

[1] See *Logic*, L. V. [2] *Examination*, p. 6.

as its author, as he is in denying that it is ordinarily and intentionally recognised by Hamilton. The distinction of Subjective and Objective Relativity is as old at least as the time of Sextus Empiricus. Things are relative, in the first place, inasmuch as they appear to a person judging; and they are relative in the second place, inasmuch as no object comes into the mind which is not accompanied by some other with which it is necessarily compared, and found like to or different from it.[1] Hamilton's doctrine of relativity might be taken as a full, new, and explicit development of those two forms of relation.

This latter principle, made specific, forms an essential part of Hamilton's doctrine of Relativity in its objective aspect. It is laid down by him as a condition of consciousness itself—that of Contrast or Discrimination, and shown by him to have a threefold application—viz., to the difference of Self and Not-self—of the conscious states from each other,—of the parts and qualities of the outward world.[2] Difference in the object known is for him a universal condition of knowledge. Hamilton most certainly would not have thrown together the several clauses purporting to express the same doctrine, which Mill has done, as these may easily be shown to mean several totally different things. And he would have readily pointed out that two objects, in Mill's sense, are not required to constitute plurality in the object, but simply the object and its opposite concept.

There is one other respect, and that an essential one, in which Mill has misrepresented Hamilton's doctrine. He speaks approvingly of the doctrine which

[1] *Hypotyposes*, L. I. c. xiv., §§ 135 *et seq.* [2] *Metaphysics*, L. XI.

"holds the entire inaccessibility to our faculties of any other knowledge or thing than that of the impressions which they produce in our mental (*sic*) consciousness. This is a substantial doctrine of relativity."[1]

This—which may be named the doctrine of Impressional Relativity—is the mode in which he habitually interprets Hamilton's use of the expressions *phænomenon*, *phænomenal knowledge*, and *relative knowledge*. Mill is never able to see that these can mean anything but a doctrine of impressions from incognisable objects on what he calls the "mental" consciousness. This is what, as a critic, he has no business to do. Hamilton uses the expressions referred to in a totally different sense from that which Mill would force upon them. And further, Hamilton would most certainly have repudiated as illogical and contradictory this "substantial" doctrine of relativity. He would have shown that the inference from the impression to the unknown object is bad on any view of the principle of causality—as wholly transcending its sphere; as in fact assuming that this principle can not only tell us that there is a cause of an impression, but the nature of the cause itself, as at least not an impression—the cause being at the same time contradictorily pronounced absolutely incognisable. And he would further have pointed out that this so-called relativity of knowledge is neither a primary nor an essential relativity, as every fundamental doctrine on such a point ought to be. It is not primary, for in supposing an object to be known as the cause of impressions, it supposes the prior relation of mind and object, and it supposes also the fundamental categories of one and many, cause

[1] *Examination*, c. ii. p. 13.

and effect, &c. It is not essential to knowledge, for the whole sphere of our knowledge of our conscious states, is possible without it. We do not know the acts and states of consciousness as impressions on the consciousness from an incognisable object. We know these directly—essentially. And such a theory of relativity, if set up as the only one substantial and important, would leave the greater part of our knowledge untouched and absolute.

But there is a further point in the doctrine :—

> "All existence known by us is relative existence [existence under what may be called its objective relation—relation to the being beyond it.] . . . But it does not follow that all relative existence is relative to us ; that all that can be known even by a limited intelligence is actually cognisable by us."

This leads to a more precise limitation of our knowledge. "All we know is known only under the special conditions of knowledge." Here relativity is divided into two branches—

> "1°, The properties of existence are not necessarily, in number, only as the number of our faculties of apprehending them.
>
> "2°, The properties known are not to be held as known in their native purity, and without addition or modification from our organs of sense, or our capacities of intelligence."[1]

We have a certain number of susceptibilities and faculties, organic and intellectual. These are "accommodated" in their nature or constitution to corresponding objects, whether potencies or actual forms of being in the universe. As is the number of those subjective

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VIII.

powers, so is the number of the objects known by us. But possible modes of existence,—modes that may be known by other more richly endowed intelligences than we—even by us if our powers were increased in number, —these we are not entitled to deny. We can conceive them as possible—that is, as possible modes in relation to a possible intelligence. We have, so to speak, the scheme or framework of their reality; but it is not filled up—it is void of content. Against all this, on the principles of the theory of relativity, nothing can be said. The strongest passage[1] implies a universe with modes of being and knowledge possible to us, apart altogether from our faculties of apprehension. It is even said that if every eye to see, if every ear to hear, were annihilated, that which could be seen, that which could be heard, would still remain. The *could be* here may be taken, however, simply as expressing a subsisting potentiality—a power that would operate to seeing and hearing, if the condition of the organic function were supplied; otherwise what is phænomenal, or the object of a sense, must be regarded as existing, whether we perceive it or not, exactly as we perceive it. And this form of existence might, in a subordinate sense, be considered as absolute—in existence as in knowledge, the same to all human intelligence. Be this as it may, the broad principle is clear that the variety of our perceptions and sensations depends on the various potencies, so to speak, in an objective universe—primarily sundered from us—indifferent to us and our powers; and only through our relationship to it, with properly accommodated faculties, do we come to know aught.

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VIII.

And on no other ground can the infinite variety in the matter or objects of our cognition be explained. Deduced from the general abstract laws of intelligence it cannot be; any one quality *a priori* deducible from any other is an equally vain doctrine. There is a parallelism between the universe of objective being and of subjective knowledge; this parallelism, this correlation, is the first and last fact for us.

But besides the probable inadequacy in number of our faculties to the possible modes of being, there is a consideration of still greater importance :—

"What we know is not a simple relation apprehended between the object known and the subject knowing, but every knowledge is a sum made up of several elements; and the great business of philosophy is to analyse and discriminate these elements, and to determine whence these contributions have been derived."

Hamilton illustrates this by reference to external perception. In this act the mind does not know the external object "in immediate relation to itself, but mediately in relation to the organs of sense." This is the case universally in Sense-Perception. Further, the object of perception "may make its impression on the organ through an intervening medium."

"As the full object presented to the mind, in perception, [sight] is an object compounded of the external object emitting or reflecting light, *i.e.*, modifying the external medium,—of this external medium,—and of the living organ of sense, in their mutual relation,—let us suppose, in the example I have taken [perception of a book], that the full or adequate object perceived is equal to twelve, and that this amount is made up of three several parts,—of four, contributed by the book, of four, contributed by all that intervenes between the book and the organ, and of four, contributed by the living organ itself."[1]

As in sense, so in every act of knowledge. We are liable to be deceived by not distinguishing what is contributed by the mind itself.[2]

This reference to the composite character of the object of External Perception is not to be taken as conflicting with the doctrine of immediate perception or natural realism, elsewhere so frequently inculcated by the writer. Indeed, it harmonises thoroughly with the latest form of his doctrine of Immediate Perception, as an apprehension in and through the organism of extension and resistance. The total, full, or real object is here stated to be a composite one, but this is the total object as apprehended by the mind,—not the object merely, or element of the object in immediate relation to the organ of sense. This composite object of outward space, of bodily affection, may be made up through different acts of immediate apprehension or perception,—indeed is confessedly so made up, ere it is presented as a whole to the mind. And it seems to be the aim of the later analysis by Hamilton of Perception to show this, and to show how the total object is successively constituted. But there is nothing in Hamilton's statements to show that he regarded any quality or element of the non-Ego as illusorily presented to us as a part of the Ego, or *vice versâ*. These elements are given together, but they are capable of exact discrimination; and this it is the express aim of the philosophy of perception to accomplish.

Hamilton's general principle, that existence is wider

[1] *Metaphysics*, L. VIII. [2] *Ibid.*

than our knowledge, has been assailed on the ground that as subject implies object, there is no reality separable from an intelligence which thinks. Inability to conceive such an object, or existence, means inability to conceive an abstraction. There is no absolute being in the sense of being out of relation to thought.

Because subject implies object, object *per se*, out of relation to a conscious subject, is, it is argued, unreal. On the logical principle of correlation, the one term implies the other in our thought. A half means and implies another half; a centre implies a circumference; the one end of a stick implies the other. Thinking the one, we must think the other; each is meaningless by itself. But this is a purely analytic act of thought. It is a tautology, and has no metaphysical import. It never touches the question at issue as to whether the existence of the object, as a matter of fact, is or is not suspended on the consciousness of it by the knowing self or subject in any given case. It may be quite true that if I know, I know an object in contrast to me the subject knowing, and that there is no object known by me at all unless as object to me the subject. But the object may, for all that, possess a permanent and potential existence, of such a kind that it is capable of reappearing to me as a similar object or phænomenon. The subject undoubtedly possesses such an existence; for it is identical, and appears in its identity amid the variety of objects; and if the argument were worth anything, it would be valid against the existence of the subject *per se* as well. The identity of the self, and the permanence and uniformity in the recurrence of the objects of experience, are utterly incompatible with the identity of the relation of conscious subject and known object, or of knowledge with that of existence. It leaves the relation itself ungrounded, and it makes existence convertible with the actual fleeting relations of subject and object.

But there is a confusion in a criticism of this sort between relation to us as subject, or to our thought, and relation to any subject or thought. Although it were proved that subject and object are inseparable,—that the one always implies the other,—it does not follow that the sphere of subject and object in reality is identical with that of the Ego and non-Ego, or subject and object, of human consciousness. Even admitting that being apart from object to a subject is meaningless or unreal, it does not follow that being is identical with the object to the human or conscious subject. Consequently, there may be being or object out of relation to every human consciousness, and yet in relation to other knowers. This would be the irrelative *to us*, and as such would be incognisable, equally with the irrelative *per se*. So far as the doctrine of Hamilton is concerned, it matters nothing whether the irrelative be one allowed to be real, as relative to others, or one denied to be real, so long as it is the irrelative, incognisable, for us. But the implied purport of the criticism is dogmatically and illegitimately to assume that the relative is the real, and the relative for us is the absolutely real.

But further, because we can conceive no object out of relation to a subject, it does not follow that this definite or limited existence of object is the only existence, or is convertible with all existence. Absolute in the sense of irrelative being is not a contradiction in terms,—cannot by us be pronounced to be so. What is not a contradiction is possible,—possibly existent. It is the negation, no doubt, of definite, limited, or known being; but we cannot say that existence out of all relation to a knower is a contradiction, unless on the supposition that definite or known being is the *only* being, or is *all* being. But this is a simple *petitio principii.* We reason thus: Known being is all being; irrelative being is a contradiction of known (relative) being; therefore there is no absolute (irrelative) being. If this be not so, of what else is irrelative being a contradiction? What does its affirmation contradict except the arbitrary limitation of being to relative or known being in the first place? And what kind of argument is this but a tautological see-saw? What if relative being *per se* be itself inconceivable? What if we can but hold it as a portion of what we must think—the definite side? Does not the fact of relative or known being in our experience suggest a surrounding of the unknown and unknowable, as strictly for us at least irrelative? Does not the very insufficiency of the being we actually know necessarily suggest to us not only the possibility but the fact of transcendent being as a ground of this known and temporary sphere? If there be no sphere of the irrelative or transcendent, what must follow but that experience is God,—God as He is and as He must be,—the one being the all, the all being the one?

It may be added that Kant is entirely opposed to this inference. He holds the object of the Idea of an Ego, one, simple, indivisible, to be incapable of affirmation on speculative grounds. It is not matter of intuition; it cannot be brought under any concept of the understanding; it can only be speculatively inferred through a paralogism; yet he maintains that it is possible in reality, and that it may admit of proof on other than speculative grounds. The case is very much the same with the Ideal of Reason,—God. Kant very pertinently asks how any one can contest the objective reality of those ideas, seeing there is no contradiction in them, and he knows as little how to deny as we how to assert their possibility.[1] He thus perfectly recognises the principle that mere inconceivability in no way implies non-existence,—that in fact existence is wider than conceivable knowledge, that is, relative knowledge. This is really all that Hamilton, in common with philosophers of the most opposite schools, contends for.

But it has been alleged that to say that human knowledge is relative, or only of the phænomenal, is to imply a contradiction. We cannot say that our knowledge is relative or phænomenal unless we know that absolute or something of which it is phænomenal. If we know that knowledge is relative, we know that of which it is a manifestation. Those who take this position obviously forget that precisely the same reasoning must apply to the relation of Causality, if it applies at all to the relation of Substance and Phænomenon. A change appears to me,—an apparent rise of a quality or thing into being. Somehow, it matters nothing how, I am led, even constrained, to think this change as but a new form of something which went before it, and which has been transmuted into it; but as yet, and until science comes to my aid, I do not know what. In other words, I have asserted *a* cause,—the need for a cause; but *the* cause itself I do not as yet know. Is this a contradic-

[1] *Kritik*, Hart., p. 486; Müller, vol. ii. p. 577.

tory procedure, or an unreasonable procedure? Am I to be debarred from (synthetically) predicating a cause of change? Am I to wait until I know the cause before I can assert that the change is an effect? Certainly, if the argument be well founded on which I am debarred from asserting a substance or ground of being for a given quality, or for a change in a series of qualities. But it is impossible that I can ever find the cause on such a ridiculous position. If I cannot predicate, first of all, the necessity of the unknown cause, I should never move a step by science to seek the cause.

But we know well that the change of the present moment is the product of a cause in a past time, though we do not in the least know what that cause is. We know quite well that the light or the sound we see or hear is the result of something beyond the immediate sphere of sense, and yet have to wait for centuries ere we know what that is,—whether a form of motion, and what sort of motion. And here even the two relations of cause and effect, and of substance and phænomenon, may be shown to coincide. We might quite well translate change or effect into quality, and cause into active substance. And we might speak with perfect propriety of the effect being phænomenon, and a phænomenon of what is as yet unknown. Light is in a sense a quality or phænomenon of the ground or substance, motion; it, as well as heat and sound, is phænomenal to us, in the first place, of being or substance which we do not know, but which we happen in the course of the ages to come to know. Yet we properly called it phænomenal, when we did not know that of which it was phænomenal. And, consequently, what is true in any special instance is true in the last resort. Even if the cause or substance of the sum of phænomena known by us were found to be incognisable, we might still with perfect reason hold that it is the phænomenon or effect of an unknown reality. What is true of cause is true of substance. I may still be entitled to speak of substance, ultimate substance, as absolute, as incognisable by me, and know that somehow it is—that my knowledge is of its manifestations—even though in itself it be wholly veiled from me. My knowledge, taken as a whole, may ultimately be found so imperfect as in itself to suggest the something beyond. This is bound up with it, implied in it. This dim correlative is enough to enable me to say that the fact is phænomenal, relative alike to substance and cause. We have, and can have, no concomitant or independent knowledge of the substance, which might enable us to determine what we know as phænomenal. It is enough if the definite experience, the fact or sum of facts we know, be unthinkable by us, *per se*, apart from a reference to something which grounds and yet transcends it. With this as a correlative, a necessary correlative, we are yet perfectly entitled to say that our knowledge, our definite or positive knowledge, is of the relative, and only of the relative; while our faith, founded on the conscious limitation of our knowledge, proclaims its imperfection, its inadequacy as the expression of all reality.

CHAPTER X.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE LAWS OF KNOWLEDGE — HAMILTON AND KANT—THE CONDITIONED AND THE UNCONDITIONED.

We may be allowed to have a knowledge of Time and Space and Existence in Time and Space. We apprehend or know the present moment, the point or points of space before us, the fact or phænomenon in space,—the extended object. We may, nay, must, raise certain questions regarding this knowledge. Is the point of time which I know connected with a moment beyond it? Is it necessarily so connected? It would seem so. This last known moment of time is obviously to my thought dependent on a preceding moment. The present means the present as against the past. But this preceding moment in its turn depends on a further moment. It matters not what be the object I think as filling the moment of time; as I think the moment in which it is, I necessarily think this moment as itself dependent on a still previous one. The question arises, How far can I go back? How far can I go adding on to the present moment—that is, making a regressive synthesis of moments? Here I have but two opposing alternatives, if I am to reach completeness in my regress. Either I must be able to go backwards until I realise the infinite regress of time, or until I find a point before which there is no time—that is, an absolute commencement of time. The former I cannot do, for this would imply the infinite addition in thought of finite times, and such an addition would itself require an eternity for its accomplishment.[1] On the other hand, I am able as little to conceive or imagine an absolute commencement of time —that is, a beginning beyond which time is conceived as non-existent. As well try to think without thought, as seek to realise this.

What holds of time holds of space. It is impossible for us to represent to ourselves the immensity—the boundlessness of space, or the absolute totality of space,—space beyond which there is no space. All that we reach in each case is the indefinite—that beyond which we can always go—not, however, realising anything but this possible indefinitude of movement. The indefinite however expanded is always the finite. The indefinite is merely the negation of the actual apprehension of limits; the infinite is the negation of the possible existence of limits.[2] We fail to reach the infinite in quantity—that is, "the unconditionally unlimited;" we fail equally to reach the absolute in quantity—that is, "the unconditionally limited." Our knowledge is thus of the conditioned, and of the conditioned only. The moment or point known is known as related to, dependent upon, or conditioned by something else—some other moment in time or point in space.

The same is true of the relations of cause and sub-

[1] *Discussions*, p. 29. [2] *Logic*, L. VI.

stance. To take only the former. We start from a given phænomenon in time—something that appears to be. This leads us at once to think of a cause or form of existence by and through which it has arisen into apparent being. Whence this cause in its turn, is the necessary question. If it be necessary to put the question in the first instance, it is always necessary. Here, too, we fall back upon an infinite regress of phænomenal causes: or we must arrive at a cause in the series which is not itself an effect, an absolutely first cause of phænomena. But neither of these alternatives is conceivable by us. An infinite regress of causes could be realised only in an infinite time; an absolute commencement is for us inconceivable. We must think the phænomenon as existing—as existing relatively in time. Change is always within existence; there is previous existence implied in change. There is thus always relation to being beyond. Hence, as we are unable to realise either an absolute commencement of time or an infinite non-commencement of time, we can actually realise neither an infinite regress of causes nor an absolutely first cause—a cause not itself an effect. Either of these would be a form of the unconditioned. In the case of the infinite regress of causes, the unconditioned lies in the totality of the series, for each of the members is conceived as conditioned or relative; in the case of the absolute commencement, the unconditioned is the first of the series, having no condition before it, while it is the condition of all that follows.

It should here be observed that Hamilton's position regarding the ultimate impossibility of compassing the totality of the conditions of time and space, the unconditioned in either, holds good, whether we regard these as real in the sense of self-subsisting objects outside of us, or the relations of self-subsisting objects, or merely ideal forms of thought. It is sufficient for his argument that time and space are at least quantities; and this they are, be they objective or merely subjective. Even intensive quantity—degree or power—would form a basis for exactly the same argument, whether it be regarded as material or purely spiritual. So that Kant's professed solution of the first two cosmological antinomies, infinitude and finitude in time and space, by supposing the phænomenon in these to be purely subjective, or non-existent out of us, in no way affects the ground of Hamilton's general doctrine as to our power of conceiving or knowing.

Further, it is sufficient for the doctrine of the conditioned in its psychological application that existence in any form be given, and what we think we necessarily think as existing in some form. What we think about must be thought to exist, and to exist in time, or in time and space. And this existence, whether objective or subjective, we are unable to conceive either as absolutely commencing, or as infinitely non-commencing. Our capacity of thought is thus proved incompetent to what we necessarily think about. Existence, time, space, are the indispensable conditions of actual thought; and yet when we seek to run them back to the counter-alternatives, in one or other of which we cannot but admit they exist, we are unable, as even Kant himself allows, positively to represent or conceive either.[1]

By *condition* thus in thought, Hamilton means that

[1] Compare *Metaphysics*, vol. ii., App. II.

without which thought cannot be, or an object cannot be thought. In thought he would include intuition, or perception of the individual, and conception or comprehension of the general and universal,—in fact, consciousness in the sense of knowledge. Every object which we think in this wide sense is known as the term of a relation; it is object to the conscious subject or self. This is the condition of being known. Every object is also known or knowable as existing in certain necessary relations; the principal of these being that of substance and quality, time and space, or succession and coexistence. These are the conditions of the object as existent and knowable. In each there is difference, plurality, relation. It should also be noted that *condition* is not synonymous with *cause.* Condition is simply that without which, on the one hand, an object is not known, and, on the other, without which it is not knowable by us. Cause, again, is at the least that by and through which an object is, or is given in our experience,—"the power of effectuating a change." Hamilton would certainly not have regarded the moments of time taken in regress as causes of the moment from which we start; or the coexisting points of space as causes, much less mutually causative. These are simply conditions,—conditions of each other. Kant himself has not avoided this confusion of causality and succession in his solution of the third antinomy,—freedom and necessary causation; and the fallacy frequently recurs in contemporary neo-Kantian literature. But the *post hoc* and the *propter hoc* still survive as incapable of identification.

Our thought, then, is of the conditioned, and the conditioned only. Let us try to rise above this in regard to time or space, the beginning of the world or series of phænomena, the component elements of the world, the infinitely divisible or the absolutely indivisible, natural causation and free causation, the contingent or changeable in things and the necessary; we are equally precluded from reaching the unconditioned in any form. We have a series of opposing, even contradictory alternatives, the moment we seek to rise above the finite, conditioned, or relative. Yet, in Hamilton's view, we are able to say that our intelligence is not deceitful,—is not driven to the despair of scepticism. It is weak, but not illusory. The problem of Hamilton is to show how this is so,—whence these contradictory alternatives rise, and how even on the principles of human knowledge we are able and obliged to accept one of the alternatives.

This, then, is the Conditioned for us. But Hamilton distinguishes between "the conditioned" and "the conditionally conditioned," "the relatively or conditionally relative." The correlative phrases are the unconditioned, and "the unconditionally conditioned," "the relative absolutely, or infinitely." What precisely is the distinction between the conditioned and the conditionally conditioned? The former is of course the mean between either term of the unconditioned, absolute or infinite, —the opposite or contradictory alike of the unconditionally limited, or absolute, and of the unconditionally unlimited, or the infinite,—say of time as a whole, as completed, and of time as never ending. The conditionally conditioned is the opposite or contradictory of *the un*conditioned of the conditioned. The conditioned as thought always implies two terms,—a relative and correlative—as before and after, here and there, subject and object, substance and phænomenon. The one of these is conditioned by the other; subject conditions object, object conditions subject,—so substance and phænomenon. Let us now try to think one of these *per se*, one out of relation to the other, and we cannot, because we cannot think the unconditioned of the conditioned. We must, therefore, think the conditionally conditioned. The unconditionally conditioned, or the unconditional of the conditioned, would be either of these terms thought *per se*. This is impossible, unthinkable. The unconditioned would be the unconditioned absolutely, or infinitely,—the genus of the absolute or the infinite. The conditioned *per se* would be the relative, or the finite, in abstraction. But the conditioned we know is a conditionally conditioned, that is, it is a term relative to or conditioned by another term, as object by subject, quality by substance. Each is conditioned by the other; it is internally or conditionally conditioned.

The Unconditioned is thus simply the highest expression for the common element in what is properly absolute and infinite in thought, or as these can be understood. In each there is an element that may be named unconditioned — viz., in the absolute, unconditional limitation; in the infinite, unconditional nonlimitation—*i.e.* (absolute) completeness; (infinite) endlessness. The genus of the two, that which holds their common element is thus the Unconditioned. No proper objection can be made to this expression, as none can be made to the Incomprehensible, the Contradictory, or the Unknowable. All these mean simply a common element; and we are not to infer that this is either a personification or an abstraction, supposed to be realisable *per se*. It is an accurate way of stating this element. Its realisation is, of course, subject to the ordinary conditions under which any universal notion is actually thought.

At this point there emerges the crucial distinction between the Unconditioned and the species, or Inconditionates which it contains—viz., Absolute and Infinite. The Unconditioned, as connoting the common element in the absolute and infinite, signifies simply limitation regarded as complete, or non-limitation as actual. But the Unconditioned has been taken to mean one notion, in which are actually united both those kinds of sub-species—the complete and the endless. According to Hamilton, the Unconditioned, regarded as the actually realised genus or sum of the two inconditionates — the Absolute and the Infinite — is not only an inconceivable notion; it is a contradiction — a notion which annihilates itself through a simple violation of the law of non-contradiction. This notion or alleged notion of the Unconditioned is, according to Hamilton, no notion at all, but a pure and simple contradiction—the annihilation of thought. We know what the terms mean, but they not only baffle conception; their union destroys a subject of predication at all. Each of the terms, or inconditionates, supposed to be united under it, is simply, as irrelative, inconceivable. As such the object shadowed out is not necessarily impossible in reality, or non-existent. The Absolute by itself is not a contradiction or self-contradiction; the Infinite by itself is not a contradiction or self-contradiction. The inconceivableness of each does not preclude the possibility in existence of each. But the alleged notion of the Unconditioned, or the attempt to combine in one thought or to grasp the Unconditioned as one, does imply an impossibility alike of thought and being. The Unconditioned regarded as one, or thought as one, is necessarily the union of contradictories. We have in it, for example, the assertion of an absolute beginning and its negation; we have the assertion of an absolutely first and of an infinite series. We have absolute and infinite affirmed,—absolute limitation, infinite non-limitation. We have contingency in things, and a necessary ground of things as alternatives. These we cannot conceive as one notion, or as one. Thus joined in their extension, they are pure contradictories. They not only cannot be applied to one object of thought; they simply, as thus applied, annihilate the matter or object of thought. The Unconditioned is thus, in Hamilton's view, "the formally illegitimate,—a fasciculus of negations of the Conditioned in its opposite extremes." We are able to conceive the requisites of the Unconditioned as a notion; we know the meaning of the terms in which its postulates are couched. But that is all. We know enough to know that these postulates imply contradictions; and the attempt to fuse them results simply in the zero of thought and knowledge. This, according to Hamilton, has "no objective application"—no reality, because it has "no subjective affirmation." It is a nullity in thought, and therefore a nullity in existence.

"It affords no real knowledge, because it contains nothing even conceivable; and it is self-contradictory, because it is not a notion, either simple or positive, but only a fasciculus of negations,—negations of the Conditioned in its opposite extremes, and bound together merely by the aid of language and their common character of incomprehensibility." [1]

The meaning here stands out perfectly clearly—viz., that the Unconditioned is the contradictory. The inconditionate, whether absolute or infinite, is not self-contradictory, but simply irrelative and inconceivable. To point out this, which should not have needed to be pointed out to any one assuming the position of a critic of the system, is to answer the objections to it, founded on misconception. One critic, after quoting this passage, actually calls upon us to note this as

"the first and most fundamental of Sir W. Hamilton's arguments, that our ideas of the Infinite and Absolute are 'only a fasciculus of negations.'" [2]

The fundamental argument is nothing of the sort. There is a double misrepresentation of Hamilton's statement and argument in this: (1) He is not speaking at all of "our ideas of the Infinite and the Absolute," but of our idea (alleged) of the Infinite and Absolute as one notion, or of a supposed single conception of Infinite and Absolute. He denies the unity or possible unity of any such notion. And (2) he denies it on the ground that the alleged notion is not only a fasciculus of negations but of contradictions, and that accordingly it is psychologically unreal, a mere delusion.

But the climax of misconception is still to be realised.

[1] *Discussions*, p. 17.

[2] Mill's *Examination*, p. 38 (1st ed.) In the 4th ed., p. 53, the sentence runs, "are purely negative, and the Unconditioned which combines the two, a fasciculus of negations."

"If we are told," Mill says, "that there is some one Being who is or which is The Absolute,—not something absolute, but the absolute itself,—the proposition can be understood in no other sense than that the supposed Being possesses in absolute completeness *all* predicates: is absolutely good and absolutely bad; absolutely wise and absolutely stupid; and so forth. The conception of such a being—I will not say of such a God—is worse than a fasciculus of negations,—it is a fasciculus of contradictions; and our author might have spared himself the trouble of proving a thing to be unknowable, which cannot be spoken of but in words, implying the impossibility of its existence."[1]

Clearly here "The Absolute" of the critic is meant to stand for "The Unconditioned" of Hamilton. And this latter is the object of criticism. But would not any one reading this suppose that Hamilton had only alleged the Unconditioned, or the Absolute thus used for it, to be "a fasciculus of negations;" that he had not declared it to be "a fasciculus of contradictions;" and that he had on other grounds than that it is a fasciculus of contradictions sought "to prove" it unknowable? That certainly is the impression conveyed by the critic, and apparently sought to be conveyed; but it is false in every particular. Hamilton, as we have seen, expressly repudiated the Unconditioned or the Absolute, on the ground that when properly analysed it is a fasciculus of the negations of the conditioned in its opposite extremes,—that it is self-contradictory, and formally illegitimate. He gives and requires no further proof that there is any being corresponding to such a notion. The notion itself is psychologically null.

It ought further to be observed that there can be no

[1] Mill's *Examination*, p. 59.

greater mistake than to identify Hamilton's inconditionates with Kant's noumenon. The latter is supposed to be of a wholly different nature from the object of experience,—the phænomenon. It is incognisable, as existing in and by itself, without any relation to us, or our knowledge,—incapable, in fact, of predication on our part. But the inconditionate,—say an infinite regress of time or phænomena in time—an absolute commencement of time or of existence in time,—this is not an object of a wholly different kind from our phænomenal experience. We know time and we know phænomena in time, and what we are supposed to do in the infinite regress of unconditioned commencement of these is to carry out a definite concept of things in experience beyond all our actual experience,—nay, all our possible experience. It is, in fact, to seek to extend our knowledge of the actual to a point where there is no experience, but still to connect this knowledge with our actual experience, so as to make up, as it were, the whole of it. In truth, the inconditionates of Hamilton come very near in character the antinomies of Kant,—the pairs of so-called contradictory Ideas in regard to origin in time, limit in space, freedom and causality, contingent and necessary being; while the treatment of them, or solution of the contradiction, is very different in the two cases.

An accurate reading of Hamilton's doctrine might thus have saved him from the charge of "creating" first of all "a fictitious logical entity,"—an absolute reality, unconditioned, unqualified, existing in and for itself, independently of any mind to know it, and then with saying that consciousness is impotent, or has an inherent inability to think this fiction. This is neither accurate nor fair. There is nothing in Hamilton's statements or reasonings to justify this. No such "fictitious logical entity" was created by Hamilton. But this fiction or fictitious logical entity was (as it is now, in a covert form) the basis of philosophical theory, and of very pretentious philosophical theory, when Hamilton took up the question of the Unconditioned; and what he did was not to create a fiction, but to show what was supposed to be a reality, and the ultimate reality of things to be either contradictory, and thus a fiction, or one of two inconceivable, because irrelative alternatives. Hamilton tore off the cover from the fiction and revealed it to philosophical analysis. To state the matter otherwise is simply to reverse the work of his philosophy. It is odd to find a man represented as creating what he abolished as an object of thought at all, and thus an impossible object of being.

This is the result of Hamilton's analysis of "the Unconditioned." But while this is so, he would certainly have objected to the further criticism that the irrelative or inconditionate as inconceivable by us is meaningless, and can therefore have nothing corresponding to it in existence. The irrelative is not meaningless though inconceivable, any more than the terms of the contradictory are meaningless. We know what a wholly self-limited being would mean, as we know what an infinitely non-limited being would mean. And we have no right whatever to deny the possibility of the existence of either of these as objects. This would be to dogmatise beyond knowledge, or to assume the convertibility of actual knowledge and existence. It is only of the contradictory that we can predicate absolute non-existence, because it is self-annihilating in thought. The irrelative, though transcending relative knowledge, is at the same time its necessary complement. It is further forgotten that if on the ground of the meaninglessness of the irrelative, no predicate is possible regarding it, non-existence itself is impossible. The proper position is non-determination, or saying nothing about it.

It is the merit of Hamilton that he analysed the question of the unconditioned, and showed the inherent absurdity of one prevailing sense of it, while he pointed out the real possibilities in the case. His inconditionates are simply the forms under which we must put the questions as to the origin of the world, as to moral freedom, and God. They are further the exclusively opposite forms, and it may be quite possible to determine one or other as a fact, though not possible to do so on purely speculative grounds. Hamilton has shown himself no enemy to insight; but his dialectic is the mortal foe of non-sense.

Mill, as we have seen, misconceives Hamilton's fundamental position regarding the unconditioned. His attempt to break down the law of the conditioned itself is a signal failure. Mill imagines that by substituting what he calls "a concrete reality," or "a something" for the abstraction, the unconditioned, Hamilton's reasoning for the inconceivability of either absolute or infinite breaks down.[1] He has at length got to admit that the unconditioned as representing one being is self-contradictory, as Hamilton had shown it to be.

The gist of Mill's argument is, that "we know the

[1] *Examination*, p. 61.

infinite [in the concrete or something infinite] as greater than anything finite, and this is not to know it as finite."[1] What precisely does this mean? Does the phrase mean that we can actually conceive—at once think and imagine the infinite in any form—as of time, space, degree—as greater than *anything* finite? This is simply the point in dispute. What Hamilton alleges is that we cannot in any way know or represent to ourselves such an object of thought. We know the requirements of the conception, but we cannot realise it. A space greater than *any* finite space, actually conceived by us, is what is denied as a possibility; and space conceived as greater than the finite space of a given act or attempt in this or that moment, is not the infinite at all, but the indefinite. Is it meant that we believe space or time, the infinite in any form, as transcending what we actually conceive, or transcending the finite of any given knowledge? This is admitted, but a belief that in the utmost stretch of finite thought we do not exhaust or compass the infinity of the object thought, is an extraordinary proof that we do know this infinity. And what is the phrase really but a statement that the greater than anything finite is the infinite? But this is not the infinite at all. This is nothing positively realised as utterly or actually unlimited. This only means that when we have got the length of any the utmost finite, there is still always something stretching outwards, above, and beyond it, whatever be the matter, be it time, space, degree—in which we seek to realise the unlimited. This, of course, is the mere indefinite. Supposing that we had compassed the utmost finitude, this would simply

[1] *Examination*, p. 62.

be the absolutely complete, or the absolute in whatever form. This, again, is what Hamilton denies, and properly denies, in regard to all quantity, time, space, or degree. But to know that there is a greater, an indefinitely greater, than anything we reach, is simply to say that any quantum we can compass is not equal to all the compassable. The infinite is simply confused with the possibility of indefinite progress, and this, as Hamilton points out, is not compassable to infinity, unless on the condition of thought working always,—always through infinite time

Historically, Hamilton's theory of the conditioned connected itself directly with that portion of the criticism of Kant in which he dealt with the Ideas of the Reason. Through this Hamilton's criticism was directed to the whole subsequent positions of Absolutism in Germany and in France. If his positions be well founded, the assumptions and the methods of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Cousin, are bad intellectually, as they are contradicted morally and theologically, on grounds as ultimate as anything alleged for them can be.

Kant holds that "*the Idea*" of Reason is more than a mere negation of the conditioned; it is positively thought, although intuition gives us no object corresponding to it, and although it cannot be conceived by the understanding, being above this,—in fact, merely a logical tendency to systematise what is actually conceivable. He holds further that "the Idea" gives us no real knowledge,—that it is a necessary and inevitable source of illusion, at the same time that the critical method is able to show *how* the illusion has arisen; and while unable to destroy the fact of the illusion, can yet guard us against being deceived by it. In the case of the Idea of the "Ego" as one, simple, indivisible, existing really anywhere, or in our consciousness, as there more than a merely logically indivisible synthetic act, he professes to show that while Reason necessarily leads to this as a positive idea, it does so through a detectable paralogism. We mistake in fact the mere universal form of all consciousness of knowledge for us, for an "Ego" subsisting in and through our consciousness, as really one and indivisible, while we truly have no intuition of this, even no concept of it. We mistake for "a real self, as it exists by itself, a phænomenon only given to the sensibility of this to us unknown being."[1] The critical method shows that reason naturally and necessarily mocks us with "a transcendental illusion of reality where there is no reality."

In regard to the cosmological ideas, these are truly and absolutely contradictory antinomies. Yet they are the legitimate product of Reason. We have the positive thought (Idea) of a commencement of the world in time, a first absolutely unconditioned, and we have its contradictory in infinite non-commencement, or regress of conditions. We have the contradictions of a limited and unlimited world in space. We have equal grounds for holding that the world is composed of simple elements, and that it is not; that there is a free or unconditioned cause, a first cause, and that all is under necessary causation; that there is a necessary Being at the root of the Universe, and that there is none, nothing but the order of things.

Each of these, thesis and antithesis, can be supported

[1] *Kritik*, Hart., p. 373; Müller, vol. ii. p. 427.

by equally cogent reasons, from the very nature of Reason. So far, then, as Reason is concerned, it is the source of two sets of propositions regarding the highest objects of knowledge which are mutually subversive. A first cause, and no first cause; a necessary being at the root of the universe, and none such: these propositions are each at least equally possible, equally supported, and hence Reason is self-contradictory and discredited. No doubt Kant undertakes to show, in the case of the two first antinomies, how the illusion has arisen: that we mistake phænomena for things in themselves; that we mistake categorised objects of perception, which have no existence outside of us, for things truly existing outside of us; that we thus illegitimately apply to them the contradictory predicates, (definitely) finite and (definitely) infinite, whereas these have no true application in the case. The things to which we apply them being only subjective phænomena, our categorised impressions or affections, cannot be spoken of either as finite or infinite. They have a quantity only in our thought; and our thought never rises beyond the indefinite, that is, we can never stay in the regress of time at a phænomenon that does not imply another phænomenon (condition) beyond it; and we thus can never reach, either in intuition or in conception, an absolutely first in the series. On the other hand, we can never actually reach the infinite series, the unconditioned of infinity, and we mistake this necessity of endless regress on our part for a real infinity. But all that we actually reach is the indefinite, the finite and the infinite being equally inapplicable to the regressive tendency of our thought dealing with mere phænomena of our own consciousness, constructed by ourselves, and called objects of external intuition. This applies also to the second antinomy. There is, in a word, no real infinite regress to be grasped: all that exists is what we constitute in thought or by our synthesis, and this is merely an indefinite approximation to an ideal goal.

The third antinomy is solved by the supposition of an unconditioned or First cause, Free-Will, as *noumenon*, and a natural necessary causality among phænomena in the world of experience. As the phænomenal world is really nothing, has no subsistence, real freedom is possible. There is a twofold causation at work, but only one is real.

The fourth antinomy is solved much in the same way. In time all is conditioned or determined by what went before, but above time there may possibly exist a necessary Being. There is necessary determination in time, alongside Absolute or Unconditioned Being above it. Here, too, there are two sorts of causes at work; but, as phænomena exist only in consciousness, the infinite regress is only in appearance, a law of thought, not of things. The phænomena may have a first unconditioned cause, provided it be in the intelligible world, and exercise only intelligible causality, which does not touch time or space.

The Ideal of Reason, God, is treated as simply a personification; and the proofs of His reality as an object are, as is well known, summarily set aside by the critical method.

Hamilton holds that his doctrine differs from Kant's, in that "our faculties are shown to be weak, not deceitful. The mind is not represented as conceiving two propositions, subversive of each other, as equally possible; but only as unable to understand as possible either of the two extremes; one of which, however, on the ground of their mutual repugnance, it is compelled to recognise as true."[1]

What Kant regards as positive Ideas, clothing his unaccomplished hypotheses in Platonic nomenclature, Hamilton views as mere negations of the conceivable or conditioned, and, therefore, as incapable of grounding contradictory propositions equally possible, or being supported by two contradictory trains of reasoning equally valid. He holds that we are only unable to understand as possible either of the extremes, one of which, on the ground of their mutual repugnance, we are compelled to "recognise as true."[2] Our faculties are weak, not deceitful. He thus avoids the obligation of solving the contradictions involved in an actual thought of the Unconditioned, or Infinite, or Absolute. The Unconditioned is not a positive thought at all, but the negation simply of positive thought as Conditioned or Relative. In it you transcend the positive sphere of thought, and your "Ideas" are merely negations hypostatised.

Hamilton has thus no need to have recourse to "transcendental idealism," or the assertion of the entire subjectivity of the perceived world, a piece of dogmatism which is even incompatible with the critical method itself. He has no need further to admit the contradictories in the first two antinomies as valid, if the perceived world in time or space, or any world in time or space,

[1] *Discussions*, p. 15. [2] *Ibid.*

be allowed to be self-subsisting. For Kant's solution fails the moment you hold even an unperceived but inferred substantial reality in time or space, different from and beyond the subjective affection clothed in category. It fails, in fact, to save Reason from absolute contradiction on every recognised view of the external world save his own, that is, save one view that has neither psychology nor anything but an unanalysed tradition in favour of its essential assumption.

The critical method professes to be different from the dogmatical. How so? It professes to criticise the proof of the Ideas, viz., an Ego, a real-Ego, anywhere in the universe or in human consciousness,—a beginning, an infinite regress, or a creator. It says, in result, we cannot affirm any one of these things. Reason is paralysed; there is a paralogism, or an annihilation through contradictories, the cosmological antinomies. Is this really different from dogmatism? In no way whatever. The critical method proceeds on principles, and on an alleged representation of the ultimate principles of human reason. How otherwise can it correct the aberrations of Reason? If its assumption of the ground principles is correct, it is not merely critical, but absolute and dogmatical. If not, it is not even critical, or worthy of being spoken of as validly critical or anything else. The Reason, after the utmost that can be said for it in the way of correcting, or opening, our eyes to the necessary illusions with which it mocks us, is still essentially a faculty of illusion—in fact, of deceit. It is so in regard to the highest possible objects of human intelligence and interest,—Self, Liberty, and God. If there be essential contradiction inherent in the Reason in regard to any one of the forms of the Unconditioned, our whole intelligence is discredited, and the Practical Reason cannot after that be regarded as trustworthy. Hamilton's position, on the other hand, is that as irrelative these objects cannot be positively thought, and regarded as positive ideas in Reason; while as contradictory extremes one or other must be held to be real. Which of them is so, falls to be determined by considerations drawn from our actual experience, intellectual and moral.

To this it may be added that the doctrine at the root of the whole theory of the Conditioned, of a conscious self, really one, simple, identical, in and through the succession of the facts of consciousness, is a wholly different view from anything found in Kant. What Kant demands as the ultimate *a priori* condition of knowledge is a synthetic act of self-consciousness or apperception; and he clearly holds that we have no grounds in this to assert an Ego, one, simple, indivisible anywhere in the universe, or even "in the thinking consciousness." The "I" of Kant is but the factor in a state of consciousness, logically one and indivisible, but not capable of being regarded as really one and the same. In every representation there is an "I," but it is not necessarily the same subsisting "I." All that is demanded is an "I" logically or generically the same in every succeeding act. This is the universal condition of the possibility of knowledge. This synthetic act can readily be shown to be a mere contradictory assumption,—the assumption of an act without an agent,—the assumption of unity in modification without a one being modified,—a secondary and derivative abstraction from a fact of experience for which it is substituted, and which it is adduced to discredit. Of course no one need contend for a contentless Ego up in cloudland, transcending all thought and consciousness,—a by itself existing Ego,—and postulated as one and indivisible. This is a mere chimera of a perverse and preposterous abstraction. The Ego one and indivisible, for which we need to contend, is the one Ego of our actual consciousness, one amid its successive modifications or differences. This, I maintain, Kant does not give us, and cannot consistently give us. He cannot get beyond mere groundless logical relation. He denies this Ego as an object alike of intuition and conception; and in so doing he saps the ground of every philosophy, his own structure among the rest.

In this synthetic act, divorced from a personal Ego,—from the Ego of consciousness,—reduced to a mere co-factor in passing conscious modifications, and in the only Ego, postulated as an Idea, being a transcendent object, which is not known even to be "a thinking being,"—we see the germ of subsequent absolutist developments. There is the suggestion of the "pure Ego" of Fichte, and the "infinite Ego" of others, both empty abstractions baptised as the true and only real, and credited with the power of working out the universe, Matter, Mind, and God, in defiance of all laws of intelligibility and fact. Subsequent absolutism is a mere wheeling round of Kantianism.[1] Kant ends *in vacuo*, where consciousness and knowledge perish; the system-mongers who have followed him have conceived the sublime idea of commencing where he ended. Kant thought he descried

[1] *Kritik*, Hart.; *Muller*, vol. ii. p. 329.

from afar the land of the unconditioned, as something on the limits of real knowledge,—the little world of sensation and its coherent requisites. In this he was comparatively cautious and harmless, though not illuminative. Others since his time have made this unconditioned the starting-point, even the all in all, of knowledge and reality,—with this among other results, that the passing generations of individuals are as "children of the mist," baptised "the universal," out of which in spectral forms they appear in time, and into which again they disappear and are dissolved. But it is these systems which will have their little day. Human experience and human history have always proved too strong in the end for contradictory paradox and abstraction.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONDITIONED AND THE UNCONDITIONED—HAMILTON AND COUSIN—FICHTE, SCHELLING, HEGEL.

THERE are other doctrines of the absolute more positive than that of Kant, and we can now see how Hamilton deals with theories alleging either a conception or a knowledge of being called absolute or infinite, or the absoluto-infinite. It is his pre-eminent merit to have analysed those words *absolute*, *infinite*, *unconditioned*, and to have shown precisely what they mean, and must mean, either as representing one being, or as predicates of being in any form. A knowledge of being, a concept of being, called absolute or infinite, is alleged. Hamilton's question at once emerges,—What precisely do you mean by this so-called object of thought? Is it a one, a unit embodying both the inconditionates, the unconditional negation of limitation, the infinite, or the unconditional affirmation of limitation, the absolute—*i.e.*, the finished, perfected, completed—what is out of relation,—the simple contradictory of the infinite? This would be named the absoluto-infinite. If there be a concept of this, if there be a positive and real knowledge of existence in its all-comprehensive unity, and if the terms Absolute, Infinite, Unconditioned, be employed to denote this unit of existence, this Deity, if you choose, then the upholder is bound to prove that his "one corresponds, either with that Unconditioned which we have distinguished as the absolute, or with that Unconditioned which we have distinguished as the Infinite, or that it includes both, or that it excludes both."

Hamilton's charge against the upholders of this knowledge is that they have not done this, and have never attempted to do it. And what he further urges is that neither under the so-called concept of the unconditioned as the sum of absolute and infinite, as the fusion of the two in their distinctive comprehension, nor under either extreme, absolute or infinite, can they get a positive concept or knowledge of existence as one. The one alleged to be conceived or known cannot be the identity of the two contradictory notions, absolute and infinite, and it can as little be the exclusion of both. These are the alternatives, the dilemmatic disjunctions, which Hamilton presents to absolutism in any form; and these are the positions which must be assailed and abolished ere we can affirm that we have a knowledge of being as one, of being in its all-comprehending unity, as the abolition and yet the absorption of the duality or difference actually found in our experience.

Now there are two ways of assailing those positions, and but two ways. The one of these is represented by Cousin, and by writers since his time, who unconsciously adopt his line and method. The other mode is represented by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

What, then, is Cousin's position? and how does he vindicate it? We shall take this first, not because it was so historically, but because it is necessary to clear the ground for the purely absolutist theories. Cousin's position is simply this, that in our consciousness, or ordinary conscious experience, under the laws of our actual Understanding or Thought, we can not only conceive, but know, and know immediately as an existing object, what is called, without precision, the infinite, or absolute, or unconditioned being.

The first vice of this doctrine is the non-discrimination of the object, called absolute or infinite. It is not identified either with the unconditioned proper, or with either of its species, the inconditionates, absolute or infinite. The former alternative would be a violation of intelligibility itself, for the supposed object as a unity of thought would be self-contradictory.

Secondly, the identification of this object either with the absolute or the infinite is impossible under the laws of consciousness, or intelligence in general. Cousin himself allows that "the condition of intelligence is difference; and an act of knowledge is only possible where there exists a plurality of terms." This Hamilton holds to be true; and hence he argues that it is both incorrect and inconsistent for Cousin to hold the alleged knowledge. Under such conditions there is neither a knowledge nor a notion even of absolute being in any form. This implies the negation of difference and plurality; and we can know only as we distinguish ourselves from the object in the act of knowledge, know, therefore, only what is relative. The only immediate result is a contradiction. For the absolute as known, and the absolute as existing, are admitted to be one, identical. But the absolute, as known by an intelligence which always necessarily distinguishes itself from its object, is different from the absolute whose essence is unity. We have, then, the contradiction on such a scheme of two objects, each called absolute.

Further, supposing that there is a distinction between knowledge and existence, the absolute as known must still be known as absolute unity. This is the condition or hypothesis of its existence at all. As such, the so-called absolute known must be identified either with the subject knowing, the object known, or with the indifference of both. As identified either with subject or with object, it is contradistinguished from the object, or from the subject; it is no longer a unity, a one being, but a simple relative. The third supposition, that the absolute is identical with the neutrum or indifference of the subject and object of knowledge, abolishes the admitted condition of intelligence which says that only in this distinction of subject or object is knowledge possible. Holding, in a word, the distinction of self and not-self in knowledge, we cannot know, cannot conceive, that all-comprehending unity named Absolute Being.

Hamilton, it is hardly necessary to observe, meant by the absolute being known under the condition of the plurality of intelligence, that it could not be known as the only thing, as the only being, all-comprehensive of reality. For this condition of intelligence always supposes the knower known along with it, and distinguished from it. There is always, therefore, something out of the absolute or object known, and this is thus never wholly or absolutely one—complete, perfect, finished in itself,—an all-embracing unity. He had no need whatever to contend for the utterly inept position, as Mill supposes,[1] that the absolute *quâ* absolute is in itself plural. Moreover, plurality in the absolute itself is in no way inconsistent with its unity or oneness, as comprehending all existence. The absolute, as soul, might contain a plurality which did not imply outward difference or distinction, or an Ego along with it and contradistinguished from it. But Hamilton's argument did not in the least require him to refer to this, nor does he. He speaks only and correctly of the incompatibility of absolute unity in knowledge, if subject and object be always conceived as different existences, as two or plural. If the knower and the known be necessarily thought as different, the thought of what is absolutely one, or a being absolutely one and all-comprehensive, is impossible, inconceivable and unknowable. That is the sum and point of his argument; and of this his critic has not got a glimpse.

But there is another essential point in the doctrine of Cousin. This is the link by which he seeks to connect the absolute with the relative or conditioned. The deduction of the relative from the absolute is an insoluble problem on any scheme of absolutism, be it that of Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel. But Cousin seeks to bridge the gulf by identifying the absolute with a certain relation, by, in fact, conditioning it, making it a relative. He defines the absolute as an "absolute cause—a cause which cannot but pass into act." This, according to Hamilton, is suicidal. (1.) It defines by relation and conditions that which can be only as exclu-

[1] *Examination*, p. 64.

sive of both. This is simply playing fast and loose with words. What exists absolutely—that is, not under relation; total, self-complete, and what exists absolutely as a cause—such as cannot but pass into act,—are contradictory notions. This is to deny all relation; and to affirm one in the same thing or object.

(2.) What exists merely as a cause, exists merely for the sake of something else. In this it reaches its perfection, its completeness.

(3.) What exists necessarily as a cause, is to that extent not all-sufficient to itself; and what exists absolutely as a cause, exists in absolute dependence on the effect for its reality. Such a cause exists only in its effects. This is really a thing becoming, or seeking to be, developing into reality.

But, (4.) this is to subject the Deity, identified with the Absolute, to a necessity—a necessity of self-manifestation identical with the creation of the universe, and to subvert the fundamental postulate of a divine nature. A Being existing only as it acts to produce what is external to itself, and necessarily so acts, is no God. This is a limited, restricted being, in itself imperfect, not even real, unless in its effect.

One of the worst of Mill's misconceptions of Hamilton comes out here. He actually puts this question—

> "Why is M. Cousin under an obligation to think that if the absolute, or, to speak plainly, God, is only known to us in the character of a cause, He must exist only as a cause?"

This question would have had some relevancy if Cousin had admitted his absolute or Deity to be or be known as anything else than a cause, and a necessary one. This is the assumption which Hamilton challenged. As put by Mill, it is an irrelevant question. The absolute of Cousin—that which is all-being and one being—is defined by him as that "which cannot but pass into act," cannot but pass into the creation which is, and is his manifestation. This is his essential nature, his being. And thus, if the absolute, whatever it be called, be, as Cousin says it is, only as it is cause, and cause of a definite effect, this object exists only as cause and this cause, and nothing more. The necessity of causation under which Cousin places the object, identifies and restricts it to the single manifestation or relationship. It has no choice, no freedom, no reserve of power. There is no personality with a free alternative. It must act and be, exactly as it is, and only as it is. Creation is a necessity, and God is the necessity of creation. He is as He creates, and as He does create, nothing else or other. An absolute and necessary cause is only as it causes, and causes in one way. That is why Hamilton says, this being, if God, must exist merely as a cause, and thus as an imperfect, inchaotic, thing,—a becoming waiting for its development and reality,—a thing that must not only be what is, but must be everything that is.

Cousin's position, that of naming a particular relation —viz., causality, the absolute, and regarding the cause as necessarily determined to act, has been taken up again in these times, with little or no apprehension of its inconsequences, and its utter insufficiency to express the nature of a Deity. Such a conception is in no proper sense absolute and infinite, nor is it the absolute or the infinite. It is simply a narrow and rigid limitation of Power to a given definite issue, that which actually comes out of it, presumably our experience. Speculatively, this conception is unworthy of God; morally, it is destructive of a God altogether. For where there is necessary determination to a given issue, there is nothing infinite; where there is no choice, not necessitating even intelligence, there is nothing moral. This is simply Fate; and even if it be supposed conscious in the process, this would not elevate it, but reveal to itself its own limitation and degradation.

And what is more and worse, this absolute cause under an absolute necessity of manifestation, a necessity which extends over its whole nature, must issue in another absolute, as full and complete a form of being as itself; and then you have the contradiction of two absolutes, the one the cause or author of the other, in succession. Or if the former has not perished in the act of creation, the two absolutes, forsooth, exist in correlation. Further, if the resulting universe be regarded as finite, the act of creation is also finite; and God is not thought as infinite. Or if the universe be held infinite, it is the effect of a finite Creator,—an obvious contradiction. What more is needed to show that we have got beyond sense and intelligibility, and that all this so-called rationalistic dogmatism is pure verbalism?

The lowest form of this theory is reached when we have the infinite and finite set up, not simply as limiting correlatives, but as existing, or real, each through the other. Here each is only as, and if the other, is; each depends for its reality on that of the other; and the two vacuous entities in synthesis make the real. This hollow relationship, or relativity *per se*, is the infinite, or all we can get for it. This is the *see-saw* theory of Being. The name is preserved, the reality is gone; neither the one term baptised God, nor the other baptised man, truly is. This is worse than Cousin's Absolute Cause; for it sought to hold by a real cause working to a real effect; but this in mere illusory relationship sinks God in man, and man in God; each may be interpreted in terms of the other; they have no distinctive reality whatever; cannot be discriminated, and cannot thus be known in any form of individuality or personality. This is the absolute of relativity, the mere mirage of reality, whether finite or infinite.

But this mode of reaching absolute existence represented by Cousin has been repudiated by the philosophers of the purely absolutist type. They would admit the force of the criticism, which excludes the knowledge of it from reflective consciousness, and yet maintain that it is cognisable, if not conceivable. This, in Hamilton's view, is Schelling's position, and it is virtually the position of Fichte and Hegel. Schelling's doctrine is the one specially selected by Hamilton for criticism.

"Schelling holds that there is a capacity of knowledge above consciousness, and higher than the understanding, and this knowledge is competent to human reason as identical with the Absolute itself. In this act of knowledge—which, after Fichte, he calls the *Intellectual Intuition*—there exists no distinction of subject and object,—no contrast of knowledge and existence; all difference is lost in mere difference, all plurality in simple unity. The intuition itself—Reason and the Absolute—are identified. The Absolute exists only as known by Reason; and Reason knows only as being itself the Absolute."[1]

To this Hamilton objects—first, that the so-called

[1] *Discussions*, p. 20.

absolute is an abstraction or point of indifference reached by annihilating the subject and object of consciousness alike. It is not absolute existence, but absolute privation. Secondly, that by no process possible to intelligence can relative or conditioned being be shown to be evolved from this absolute being or stage of indifference. It is impossible to connect the state of intuition or clairvoyance above consciousness with the state of consciousness itself, by memory. And the philosopher, while personal and conscious, writing or speaking of this absolute above personal individuality and consciousness, deals only with empty words.[1]

Here it should be observed that Hamilton's criticism of Schelling does not necessarily suppose the truth of his own peculiar doctrine of the Conditioned, or theory of the derivation of the laws of Relative Knowledge. All that he proceeds upon is the universal principle of a Self and not-Self, or subject and object, in knowledge. It is indifferent to his criticism of Absolutism, whether the principle be a positive law of thought, or one derived from the impossibility of thinking either subject *per se* or object *per se.* If the law be admitted, whatever its grounds, the criticism of Schelling's position is valid.

This dualism of Hamilton excludes the possibility of any absolute doctrine whatever as matter of thought. With Fichte he has not dealt expressly or at length. But the application is obvious. Fichte's absolute Ego, which is above our consciousness, and therefore transcends the distinction of an Ego and non-Ego, is for Hamilton unthinkable. No mere or pure Ego, that is, something which is neither Ego nor non-Ego, yet capable

[1] *Discussions*, pp. 22, 23.

of developing into both, can be regarded as matter of thought in any form. Abstraction being made of the Ego and non-Ego of consciousness, the residuum called the Absolute is simply zero, a void term, and can form the ground of no reasonable philosophical theory within the sphere of consciousness.

The same line of criticism applies to Hegel. It is obvious that if conscious thought be possible only under the conditions of plurality and difference, and a Self and a not-Self, as contrasted yet independent relatives in the very moment of the contrast, any conception such as that called Pure Being or Pure Thought or Idea in its potential form is utterly incognisable. Relation and difference, in object and act of knowledge alike, have disappeared; and the residuum as incognisable, is incapable of forming the basis of any dialectical movement, immanent or other. This pure or unconditioned being is as such the undifferenced. There is therefore no discrimination of self and object; they are as yet one, or rather there is neither the one nor the other; yet this is thought or knowledge. Now no such thought or knowledge is possible to our consciousness. There cannot be a state of conscious thought or knowledge in which I am as against an object, and in which also I am not as against an object. No thought of mine can unite in one the personal and the impersonal,—can hold me in being, and being that is not yet discriminated as me and not me. There is here not a transcending of consciousness merely; there is, in the very statement of the cognisability of the object, a *felo de se*,—a *subversio principii*,—as much as in a doubt of the act of consciousness itself. Consciousness, thought, knowledge, have ceased to have meaning for us the moment the relation of contrast between Self and not-Self, subject and object, has been obliterated or abstracted from. No method of dialectical verbalism can ever on such a basis restore consciousness to itself.

The deduction of certain of the necessary laws of thought,—especially Causality and Substance,—from the doctrine of the Conditioned is an important point in the philosophy of Hamilton. He holds that the necessity we are under of thinking every phænomenon we apprehend as the quality of something out of relation, and as such absolute and unknowable, — the known phænomenon of an unknown substance,—arises on the one hand from an impotency on our part to think mere substance, substance *per se*,—that is, irrelative being; and on the other, from an impotency to think a phænomenon as such and nothing more—that is, the relative as absolutely relative,—the relative *per se*. Try to think substance *per se*, and you cannot; you at once and necessarily clothe it in quality. Try to think phænomenon or quality *per se*, and you at once refer it to a substance beyond and incognisable. Hence the law of Substance and Accident or Phænomenon.[1]

The necessity of the Causal Judgment arises from a similar impotency. We think what we think as existing, as existing in time,—therefore as relative in time. The object or event appears to begin to be, but we cannot think it absolutely beginning in time. In other words, the quantum of existence which it has or manifests is not an addition to the quantum of existence already in the universe. This we cannot represent to ourselves, either as increased without abstraction from

[1] See especially *Reid's Works*, pp. 934, 935.

other entities, or as diminished without annexation to them. We are compelled to believe that the object—that is, the certain *quale* and *quantum* of being, whose phænomenal rise into existence we have witnessed—did really exist, prior to this rise, under other forms. By *form* must be understood any mode of existence conceivable by us or not. But to say that a thing previously existed under different forms, is to say that a thing had *causes*.[1] The universal necessity, accordingly, of which we are conscious, to think causes for every event arises from our inability to realise in thought an absolute commencement of being.

This theory of the origin of substance and cause opens up a wide field of discussion, upon which I cannot now enter. It seems to me to be the least satisfactory portion of the philosophy of Hamilton. The tendency of the theory is to weaken the force of those laws, and thus of the bonds which knit together our finite experience. It may be questioned whether the impotency on our part to conceive an absolute commencement of being guarantees the necessity of the law of causality as an objective principle, or as more than a mere subjective necessity on our part. Causality would thus cease to be a necessary law of things. There would always be the possibility of an absolute or uncaused commencement as a fact.

Further, it may be questioned whether the convertibility of the quantum of existence in a given or phænomenal form with that quantum previously existing, whether known or not, is identical with the concept of causality. "To say that a thing previously existed

[1] See *Discussions*, pp. 620, 621.

under different forms, is to say that *a thing had causes*," may be true; but it does not quite say that the thing *was caused.* There is here the condition of the new event or phænomenon,—hardly its cause. We still require the ground or determining element in each actual change. We still require to ask why was there a change at all from the one form or quantum to the other; even why it was this change and not another. Even supposing that we could not conceive the existent arising from the non-existent, while we perceive the existent arising; this would not give the explanation of the movement or transmutation in the previously existent—that is, the dynamic force implied in change.

We ought, however, here to keep in mind that this is a theory of the origin of those principles merely, probably an unsatisfactory one. It would be a mistake to suppose that if this theory were shown to be untenable, the doctrine of the nature of our knowledge as more than relative would fall with it. On the contrary, all of importance in the philosophy of Hamilton would still be conserved.

CHAPTER XII.

INFERENTIAL PSYCHOLOGY OR ONTOLOGY.

WHAT, it may be asked, was the aim of Hamilton in his theory of the Conditioned, as bearing on a philosophical and rational theology?

The aim, main and direct, of his criticism of the absolute theories is to show, in the first place, that our intelligence, call it Intuition or Reason, cannot of itself, or apart from experience, give us a knowledge either of the existence or of the attributes of Deity. If it can, he virtually reasons, the Deity must appear either in the form of the unity of the absolute and infinite, or he must appear in the form of the absolute (the wholly limited, or wholly self-limited), or in that of the infinite, the endlessly unlimited. But the former so-called concept, the unconditioned proper, is a purely contradictory concept, and can typify nothing real. And while each of the latter concepts as simply irrelative is not in itself contradictory, and its object, therefore, not necessarily non-existent, it is yet impossible for mere reason or pure thought, to say that Deity is the absolute, or the infinite, —is to be referred to either category. All that it can say is that, hypothetically, if he is, he must be either the one or the other, but cannot be both. Hamilton strongly insists that the correlation of absolute with relative, of infinite with finite, proves nothing as to the reality of the absolute or infinite. As a correlative, neither is necessarily more than a mere negation of relative or finite. This correlation, then, while essential in Reason, is no proof of the reality or existence of the object, whether absolute or infinite. The correlation is satisfied by pure or ideal negation. And this is all the length reason can by itself go. Consequently, if we are to identify Deity either with the absolute or the infinite, this must be done on grounds other than those of pure reason or pure thought. And what are these possible grounds? Hamilton would allege one, if not two, but one first and principally. And this is Experience; the experience, first, which we have of the insufficiency of the conditioned, or of conditioned being as the whole of the possible in reality. In thinking the relative, we cannot think it by itself, we are driven from it and beyond it. In thinking the finite, we have a similar experience. We are thus naturally inspired with a kind of suggestion and belief in being, transcending what we actually experience.

He would add to this that there are various modes of thought in our actual experience which lead us outwards and upwards to this transcendent reality, to a natural faith in what we cannot by reason grasp. These in particular are the concepts of Substance, Cause, Moral Law.

There is, further, as Hamilton would admit, the possibility of the fact of a supernatural revelation or knowledge of Deity. This may be supposed to be independent alike of Reason and ordinary Experience. Hamilton very distinctly allows that this revelation supplements our ordinary knowledge of Deity; though he certainly would not admit anything to be properly a revelation which could be shown to contradict any fundamental law of our consciousness, whether speculative or moral. To represent him, however, as has been done, as having for "his avowed aim, by demonstrating the actual and essential weakness of human intelligence, to lend new and exclusive authority to a supernatural revelation, and to supersede reason by faith, as the sole organ of religious knowledge,"—is utterly without ground. There is nothing in the scope of his reasoning, nothing in his positive statement, to countenance such a representation of his philosophy. Hamilton's primary aim was that of vindicating the rights of our normal intelligence against illegitimate pretensions to knowledge, which could end only in scepticism. To conceive the "faith" of which Hamilton constantly speaks as faith in supernatural revelation is a mistake. He means what indeed he says he means, philosophic faith—faith in reality, which transcends positive or relative knowledge, and which is necessitated in his view by the very limitation of positive knowledge itself. He certainly discountenances Reason or Pure Thought as an organon of theology. He properly regards it as the organon of a self-contradictory verbalism, and of empty concepts. He held experience, especially of mind, to be a ground for deciding alternatives in theology, for setting the balance one way or other in favour of opposite positions not otherwise determinable. But he neither sought for any purpose to weaken our intelligence, nor to exalt exclusively a supernatural revelation. And with regard to the applications to theology of his principles subsequently made, Hamilton is not to be held responsible further than for their logical consequences.

To enter upon the grounds on which Hamilton conceived that we could found inferences in regard to transcendent being, or being beyond intuition and concept proper, would be to discuss the last and highest department of his philosophy—viz., Inferential Psychology or Ontology. This, however, my limits forbid. In the foregoing pages I have necessarily, to some extent, anticipated certain points in this department, especially the principles of the inferences. On this, which might be called the constructive side of the philosophy of Hamilton, he cannot be said fully to have explained his views. But the main principle of it may be stated as that of Analogy, or Inference through Analogy. On the ground of what we find in experience and actual consciousness only, can we rise to convictions regarding the nature of mind, of the world, and of God.

In regard to the two first objects—mind and the world—while he holds the substance of each incognisable *per se*, he virtually holds it to be relatively knowable through the specific qualities or manifestations. On this point, however, he ought to have been more explicit, and to have said that we know the two finite substances mind and matter to be, and to be of different natures appropriate to their manifestations. These are to be accepted as true revelations of the subsisting nature of each,—whatever mystery or incognisability may attach to an attempt to penetrate further. Hamilton has numerous statements which bear out this view. Indeed, in regard to mind, there is a step further to be taken; for it is known primarily as Ego or Self in its unity amid successive *states*.

In regard to what may be called material substance—that of the Not-self in sensible experience—his philosophy affords a true light, if only it be carried a step further than he left it. While we need not hold the sensible quality to be as we perceive it, out of and above perception, we may, nay, must still hold the quantum of being as a Non-ego, which it represents to continue in being. We cannot conceive this either increased or diminished; we can conceive only change, transmutation. Therein thus we have the permanent, the substantial of the Non-ego. It is the permanence of the quantum of existence in the sensible universe. This is what perishes not, only changes. This is all that Realism need ask. It does not require permanency, above perception, in the definite object of perception; the permanent quantum in the matter is alone sufficient, subsisting in potency, and capable of coming into correlation with our organism and the fixed laws of our mental powers. This is precisely what Hamilton has expressed in his doctrine of the ultimate incompressibility of matter in space.

In respect to the existence and character of God, the same principle holds good. These points are to be reached by Analogy from our experience. A noumenal entity called God in absolute abstraction from all relations is not the God we seek to infer or reach. It is, so to speak, not a being unconditioned, but a being inconditionate for which we inquire. He is the absolute being in free relation to the world and to mind. He is related on the side of time and space to the things therein, yet not as a link in the series, but as the ground of the whole; on the side of mind He is related to the Ego and the contents of consciousness,—to intelligence, personality, freedom, morality, as their ultimate ground and possibility. These reveal his truest nature for us as the unconditioned cause. Even of this God, thus defined, we have no intuition and no proper comprehension; but we have grounds for believing Him to be, and we know certain relations to the world and to consciousness through which He reveals Himself. These relations do not disclose Him in the fulness of His being: as relations they are restrictive, and they are not possibly even all the relations in which He might be manifested. They give us an imperfect, partial, representative knowledge of God, but one which is true and sure, and while capable of increase and sublimation, is incapable of being contradicted in the course of time and development.

The main point of the question is—Does a state of things exist in our experience such as is only possible through the agency of a Divine cause or Deity? But what is the notion of a Deity?

It is not merely that of a first cause, or even an omnipotent first cause, but intelligence and virtue in a primary and omnipotent cause. To establish the reality of such a Deity, we must show that intelligence stands first in the absolute order of existence, and that the universe is governed by moral laws. But the analysis of our experience gives us mind; intelligence as a free power, independent of matter and necessity, and thus a spiritual and immaterial subject. In this we have the condition of the proof of God. For Analogy entitles us to infer that intelligence holds the same relative supremacy in the universe which it holds in us. There is the priority of free creative intelligence. The law of the Microcosm applies to the Macrocosm.

Again, as moral agents and the free subjects of a moral order, we are connected with a supreme intelligence by whom that order is established, sustained, and regulated. It is thus supposed that the moral order of our experience is necessarily connected with a transcendental power and order.

The position as put by Hamilton needs considerable supplement, especially in the links of inference. We may indeed conceive an ideal intelligence first in things, and causative, as our own is, in strict analogy with our experience. We may also conceive an ideal sphere of an Intelligence free and moral, in accordance with the requisites of our own. But do these actually exist? Are they more than ideal conceptions? The knowledge of them is only possible through analogy. If there be nothing but brute matter in our experience, and no freedom, only mechanical necessity, clearly we cannot even think, far less infer, intelligence and morality in a transcendent sphere. But while there is thus a knowledge, even a presumption through analogy, the mode of inference requires to be more explicitly shown and stated,—either in the way of a proof through causality, or as a supplement to the imperfection of our experience, or as the necessity of continuous realisation and development of our moral nature. This, however, is clear, that Hamilton is an agnostic only in the sense of denying and exploding a ridiculous absolutism: and though, in the process of inference, Hamilton leaves several links unsupplied, there is yet no other opening into the supersensible, unless through Analogy. If we find not the image of God in our own consciousness, we shall rise neither to the belief nor to the knowledge that there is a God, and a God for us.

I have not attempted to discuss the Logic of Hamilton in this volume. There was not space to do it justice. I can but indicate the fact that until the time of Hamilton logical study and learning was at a very low ebb in the Universities both of Scotland and England. Whately's *Elements* (1826) was an improvement on Aldrich, but it was Hamilton who freshened the faded dialectic of Oxford. We have to look to the writings on Logic of Archbishop Thomson, Dean Mansel, and the late Professor Spalding of St Andrews, to appreciate the new line of precision and scientific treatment of the subject which was due to Hamilton's discussion of Whately's treatise in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1833, and to his subsequent logical expositions, fragmentary as these were. Hamilton, in fact, has revolutionised the treatment of the science of Logic in Britain.

The points requiring notice under the Logic are his view of the science as one of formal relations,—his view of the Laws of Thought,—of Concepts, embracing the doctrine of Comprehension and Extension, carried out to Judgments and Reasonings,—his theory of Logical Judgment, including the Quantification of the Predicate, with its application to Syllogism,—his Unfigured Syllogism, and his new canons. This wide subject must meanwhile be left untouched.

END OF HAMILTON.

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